

# Indian Muslims Since Independence

OMAR KHALIDI



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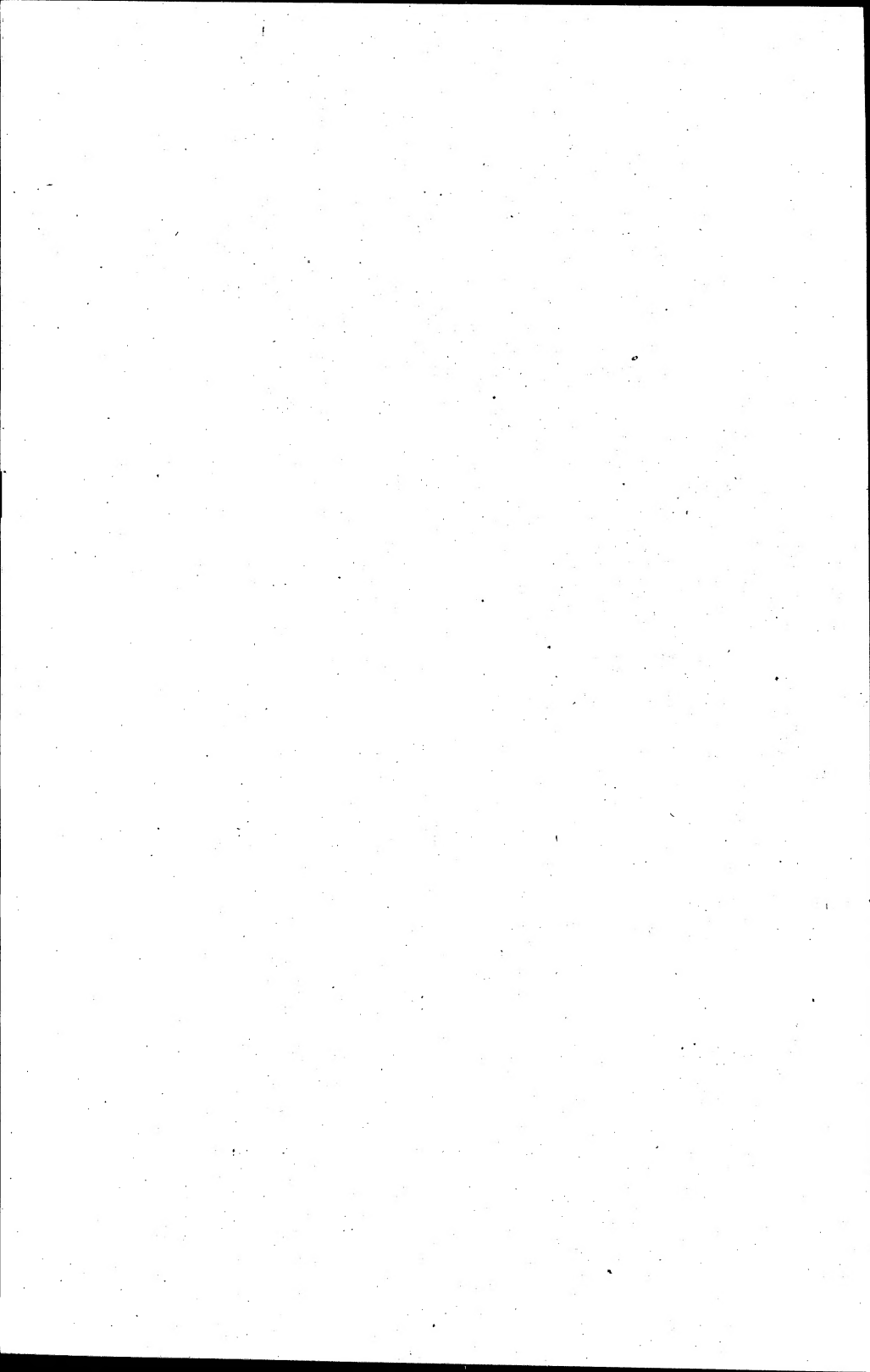
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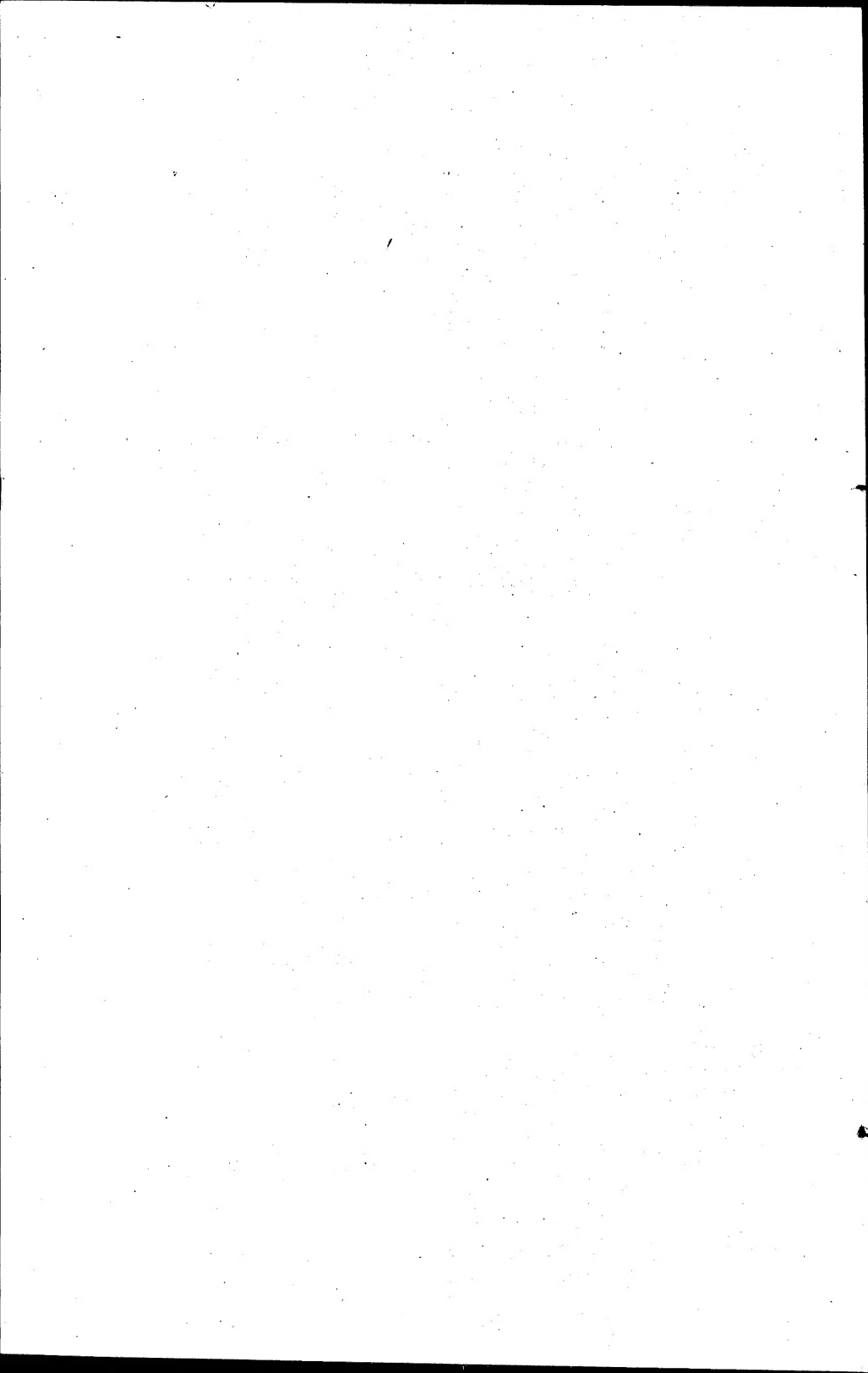
*Dedicated to*  
*My wife*  
*Nigar Sultana*





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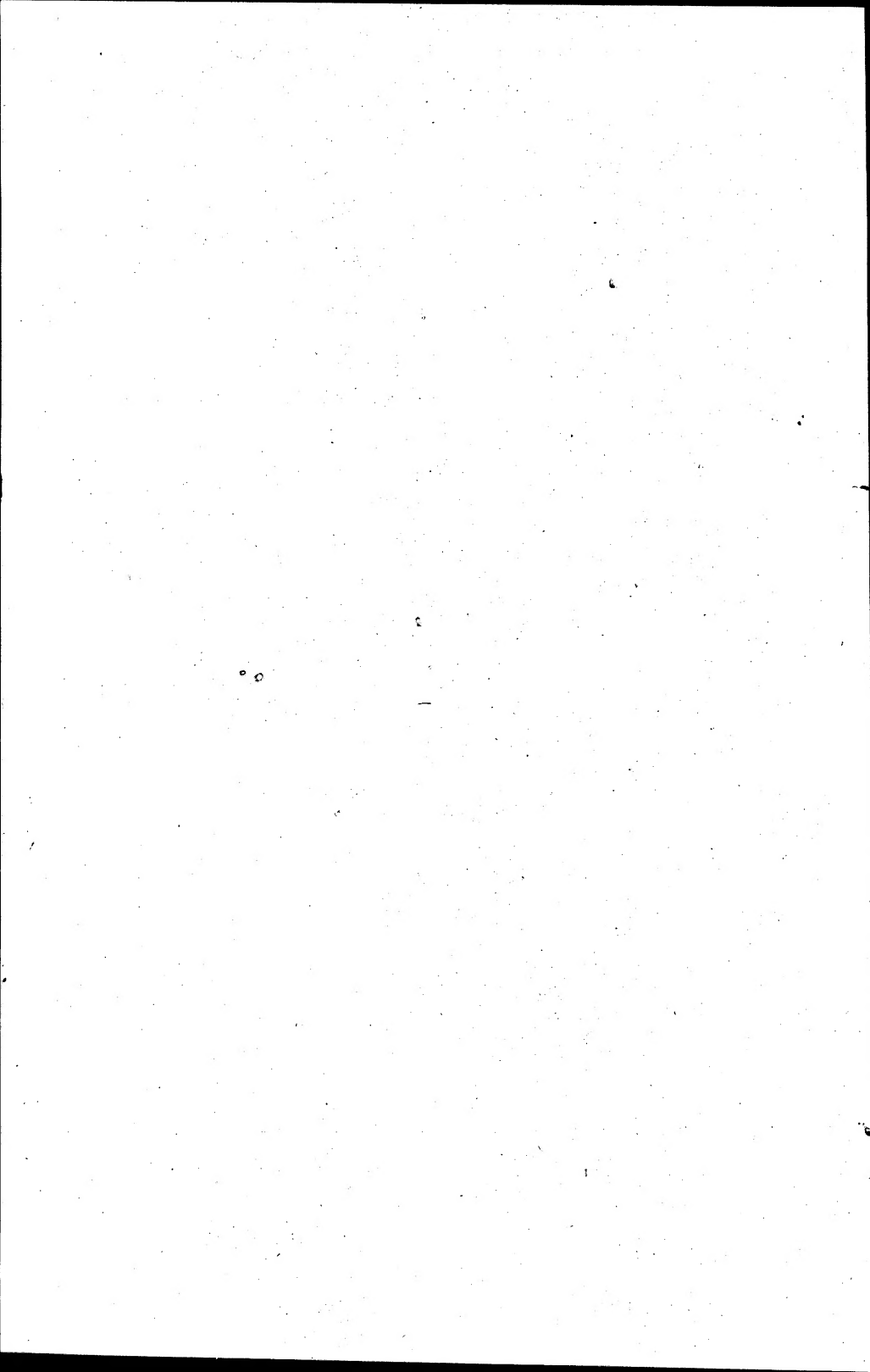
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## *Chapter I*

# Muslims in India

Nearly sixty per cent of the Muslims live in countries where they form the majority of the population. Therefore most of the academic works by and about Muslims has tended to concentrate on issues facing Muslim majorities. Little attention has been paid to the Muslim minorities spread across many countries living under varying political systems. One such minority group is that of Muslims in India, whose problems in the post-1947 situation have not been the subject of rigorous academic research. The Muslim question in India is historically, politically, and emotionally charged and needs dispassionate scholarly investigation. This book attempts to fill a gap in the literature both on the studies of Muslim minorities as well as on the minority problem in modern India.

### **Introduction**

Indian Muslims constitute the largest segment of the religious minority population in India. They are dispersed in all the 25 States and 7 Union Territories of the country in 1995. The partition of the subcontinent in August 1947 left a substantial Muslim population in India. According to the official figures of the 1981 Indian census, their total population—excluding Assam—was 75.5 million, still only about 11.35 per cent of the total. Estimating Assam at another 4.5 million, the total comes to nearly 80 million, which makes it the third largest Muslim community in the world, after Indonesia and Pakistan, both

opportunity in matters of public employment and the underrepresented Scheduled Castes and Tribes the possibility of reservations in entry. Under Articles 26, 27, and 28, minorities are free to manage their own religious affairs. The State cannot levy taxes for the promotion of any particular religion. Nor can there be compulsory attendance at religious worship or religious ceremonies in the state-supported educational institutions. The state cannot discriminate against minority-managed institutions in allocation of resources. Under Article 30, all minorities—religious, linguistic, or cultural—have the right to establish and to administer educational institutions of their choice. Articles 345, 347, 350, 350A, and 350B, which relate to rights of linguistic minorities, are also relevant in this context.

On the downside, the Indian Constitution, has a chapter on "Directive Principles of the State Policy" two articles of which many in the Muslim community object to. One is Article 44, according to which the state is to endeavour to secure for its citizens a uniform civil code; the other is Article 48, according to which the state is to take steps prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draft cattle. The possibility of replacing of *Sharia*-based Muslim Personal Law with a uniform civil code, as demanded by a vocal section of Hindu communalists as well as a small fraction of culturally-alienated Muslims, is looked upon by the majority in the community as a threat to its religious identity, even though it has already been accomplished in a number of Muslim-majority countries. The anti-cow slaughter principle is regarded as an attempt to use state power to force the cultural ethos of the Hindu majority upon the minority communities, irrespective of the economic consequences to the nation.

### **Muslim Goals in India**

Thus for the most part, the Indian Constitution provides the formal basis for the full and equal participation of Muslims in the country's public life, and does not promote Hindu religion. Although it can be argued that in theory the Constitution,



therefore, provides a model for the protection of the rights and interests of religious, linguistic, and cultural minorities, there has been a noticeable gap between the constitutional safeguards and their actual implementation. Indeed, a minimum goal of minority politics in India can be summed up as the closing of this gap between precept and practice so as to secure for minorities full participation in both polity and economy while at the same time maintaining the minority's identity against the perceived threat of assimilation into Hindu society. While differing on minute details or emphasis on a particular issue or in ways and means of achieving this goal, there is general agreement on it among Muslims belonging to various schools of thought and parties such as the Deobandi ulama, the Tablighi Jamaat, and the Ahl-i Hadith and their antithesis, the Dargah-oriented Barelawis. Similar is the case with formal organizations such as the Muslim League and Jamiat al-Ulama. Among these groups there is complete unanimity on questions such as Muslim Personal Law, Urdu, anti-Muslim violence, and educational and economic plight of the community.

Agreeing with this minimum goal but extending it further is the Jamaat-i Islami. Its protagonists call for *iqamat-i din*, or the eventual establishment of the supremacy of Sharia laws in the country, presumably first with the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam and, secondly through enforcement of the Shariat by the state apparatus. According to the Jamaat, Muslims are not just another run-of-the mill national or ethnic group with fixed membership and associated material culture. Basing itself on the Qur'anic injunction to promote good and forbid evil, it sees Muslims as a trans-ethnic, trans-national group inviting the humankind to Islam. By the Qur'anic definition, then, the concept of Muslim "minority", as a permanently numerically inferior and static group is itself foreign to Islam as its adherents are enjoined to invite non-Muslims to their religion. Thus it loudly proclaims that all other religions and modern ideologies are incomplete and Islam alone is the path to salvation. With that conception of Islam it invites Indians of all backgrounds to the true religion. Its leader Maulana Sayyid Abulala Mawdudi,

(1903-79) explicitly advised his followers to eschew narrow goals of obtaining government jobs and legislative council seats in competition with the Congress Party. Instead, he advised Muslims to spread the message of Islam through its propagation in all the languages of the country. The Jamaat's goal may be termed as the maximalist goal of a segment of the community. Given the depressed condition of the Muslim minority in India and the difficulties of enforcing Shariat in many Islamic countries, the Jamaat's aim strikes many Muslims—not to speak of others—as chimerical.

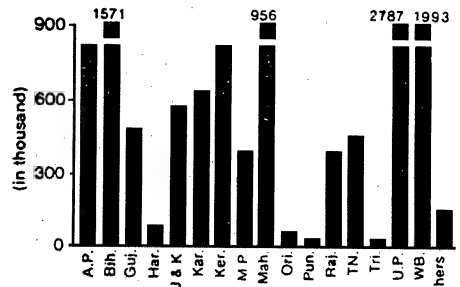
### **Focus of this Book**

Each Indian Muslim group, because of the particular spatial or historical situation in which it is located, has a different set of problems and prospects to deal with. For instance, the Mappila Muslims of Malabar are concentrated in one geographic area that permits a strong Muslim political party to function effectively in the peculiar political mosaic of Kerala. The Kerala pattern is not replicable nor replicated in other parts of India. The problem of Muslims in Assam is strictly a regional problem with roots in the demography and economy of the North-East region and in India's relations with neighbouring state of Bangladesh. The Bengali Muslims, an overwhelmingly rural population of landless peasants share little in the problems common to the Muslims elsewhere in India. As they speak a common language in Bengali, they do not face the question of Urdu which is prevalent in Hindustan and Deccan regions ( for a definition of these regions, see below). The question of Kashmiri Muslims is also outside the perview of this study as it has international implications in terms of Pakistan being a party to the dispute with India. The prosperous group of Tamil-speaking Muslims of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry collectively known as the Labbai are also excluded from the discussion in this book since as an economically well-to-do-group, they are not representative of Indian Muslims. On similar grounds, affluent Gujarati-speaking mercantile groups such as the Memons, and the three Ismaili groups of the Aga Khani Khojas, Daudi and

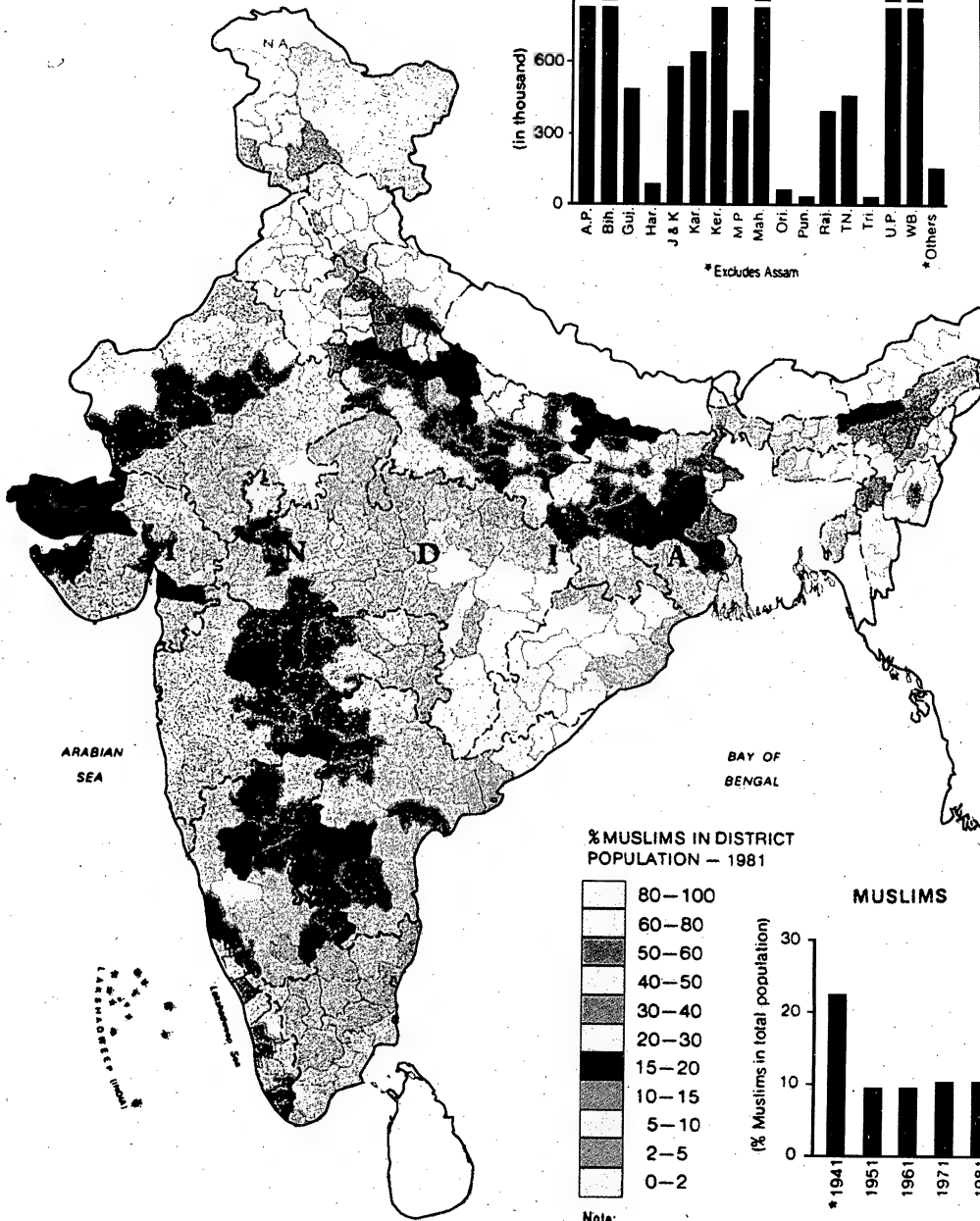
Sulaymani Bohras are also excluded. Other regionally confined groups like the Meos and Gujars of North India, Panjabi Muslims of Malerkotla, miniscule groups in the North-Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Tripura; and the Union Territories of Andaman Islands, Chandigarh, Goa, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and the Mappillas of Lakshadweep have similarly not been considered in this study.

Thus leaving aside these groups, we are concerned strictly with the Urdu-speaking Muslims of Hindustan region defined as the modern Indian States of Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh; and the Deccan comprising of the contemporary States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. The Muslims in these two regions of Hindustan and the Deccan are characterized by several commonalities that make them a homogeneous group and therefore generalities about them can be reasonably made. First, Muslims of this region are acutely conscious of their past as a former ruling group—real or perceived. From Ahmedabad in the west to Sasaram in the east and from Delhi in the north to the Deccan in the south, the entire area is redolent with the great architectural monuments of The Muslim rule, which are a daily reminder of their past glory. Secondly, in the immediate vicinity of the monuments lives a contemporary Muslim community that is educationally backward, economically poor, and politically powerless. This is particularly the case with Muslims living in the old cities of Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Delhi, and Rampur in the north and Aurangabad, Hyderabad, Bidar, Bijapur, and Gulbarga in the south, all of these Muslims were at one point or the other dependent on the feudal economy of the Muslim capitals. Thirdly, in contrast to the concentrated Muslim groups of Malabar, Assam, or Kashmir, the Muslims of these two regions are thinly dispersed. There is not a single district in all the nine States included in the two regions of our study that has a Muslim majority. The closest that a district comes to Muslim majority is Rampur with 45 per cent Muslim population. The

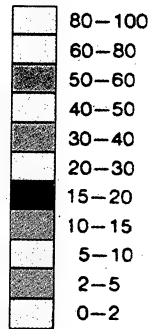
# MUSLIM HOUSEHOLDS - 1981



\* Excludes Assam



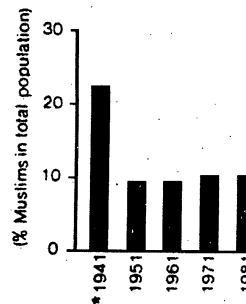
## % MUSLIMS IN DISTRICT POPULATION - 1981



Note:

Assam : 1971 data

## MUSLIMS



\* Undivided India

INDIAN

OCEAN

dispersion of Muslims has important consequences politically for it disables the group from having its own representatives in the State Legislative Assemblies at least in proportion to its population. Fourthly, except for Gujarat, Muslims in all the States covered under this study are Urdu speaking, which further justifies generalizations about the group in question. Fifthly, and finally, it is in the regions of Hindustan and the Deccan that inter-communal violence between Hindus and Muslims has been the most intense since independence in 1947, adding justification for the choice of study to be confined to a well-defined group.

#### Sources of Information for this Book

The Indian Government has tended not to publish data pertaining to the religious composition of its employees, or ownership of businesses by communal affiliation, or attainment of education by various groups. This data comes out to a certain extent in non-government sources, at least for certain types of personnel, such as the civil lists which can reveal religious affiliation by individual names. Examples of such sources are given in the bibliographies appended after each chapter. In addition to the published sources, are interviews with both Muslim and Hindu politicians, journalists, social activists, and academics in India and overseas for over a decade, which forms a rich portion of this book.

Secondary sources include writings by and about Indian Muslims in Urdu and English in the shape of books, dissertations, articles, reports, and newspaper accounts, all of which are cited after each chapter.

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## Chapter 2

# Muslim Insecurity: The Communal Riots

Last night, after working late, a sudden fear gripped me  
What if a mob suddenly grabs hold of me? What if  
they ask my name?... Will they then just let me go? I am  
not a believer. Neither Hindu nor Muslim. But will  
there be time to tell, to listen?

Gibran Ahmed \*

The bloody pogroms that engulfed India after a fanatical Hindu mob sacked an ancient mosque in Ayodhya were the third in a series of pogroms that the Muslims have experienced. The first took place during and immediately after the partition in 1947, mainly in Hindustan, or upper India. Barely a year later, Muslims in the Deccan, or south India went through the same trauma in the aftermath of India's bloody take over of Hyderabad State in September 1948. The third pogrom took place following the demolition of Babari Masjid in December 1992. While the first two pogroms affected almost the entire nation, Hindu-Muslim communal riots thereafter tended to be confined to certain cities and towns in the country and were quickly brought under control by the strong hand of the administration. But the pogroms unleashed in December 1992-

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\* Gibran Ahmed, a political activist quoted in *Business India* (21 December—January 3, 1993): p. 57.

January 1993 were in the category of the first two. In most of the communal riots, the victims were largely slum dwelling poor Muslims. However, the pogroms in the 1990s affected almost all segments of the Muslim society including the hitherto protected members of the elite. In the Hyderabad riots of 1990, Muhammad Azharuddin, the captain of India's national cricket team was attacked in his own home. Self-styled "progressive" (actually Leftist) Muslim professors of Delhi University—who habitually reviled Islam and Muslims—left their campus homes to the safety of predominantly Muslim quarters of the walled city during the riots in 1991. Mrs. Rahi Masum Riza, the wife of the popular TV mega series *Mahabharata's* script writer fled uptown Bombay to seek refuge among her coreligionists in Bhendi Bazaar during January 1993. Earlier, Zafar Agha, a senior editor at the prestigious journal *India Today* was detained by the police in Allahabad, UP as a "sala Pakistani"! As a sequel to the Bombay pogrom, the police directed thousands of Muslims, including Ali Sardar Jaafari, an eminent Urdu poet and recipient of *Padma Shri* to prove his Indian nationality in August 1994. Movie stars such as Dilip Kumar, Saira Bano, Shabana Azami, and Farah Khan have been harassed by Hindu fanatics a number of times. Examples of this kind can be easily multiplied over time and place. When elite Muslims cannot escape the mob and police brutalities, it can be imagined what must be the fate of the ordinary people with no access to power or money.

In describing and analyzing violence between Hindus and Muslims in India, the hope is to go beyond simply provoking a reaction of outrage and disgust. This is not to decry the moral sentiments of horror and distress which such periodic bloodlettings awaken in the observer, but to go a step further and suggest ways and means of predicting and preventing future occurrences. For generations the expressions of shock and dismay at such mass killings have had little or no preventive effect on future incidents of the same sort. What is needed now is the same kind of sociological analysis of religious riots that is given to the phenomenon of crime where moralizing has proved so impotent in the past. An exploration of the socio-economic



and cultural context as well as the immediate situations of such recurrent flare-ups will at least reveal observable interrelations that furnish clues for practical modes of attack in dealing with a phenomenon that has defied human efforts to check it. Or so is the hope.

### Typology of Social Violence

At the outset, it is necessary to see communal violence of the religious type as having patterned differences when compared with other forms of violence. In sum, a structural typology of social violence would show the following forms:<sup>1</sup>

- I. International hostilities and armed warfare (for example, the Sino-Indian conflict)
- II. Societal violence, that is, and violence affecting the total structure of a given society, such as
  - (i) Violence from below—revolution or revolt (e.g. the French, Soviet, and Chinese revolutions)
  - (ii) Violence from above—suppression-counter revolution (for example, Pakistani military crackdown in East Bengal, Indian atrocities in Kashmir, Serbian war-crime of genocide in Bosnia)
  - (iii) Civil War, (for example, Lebanon, Nigeria, Somalia)
- III. Societal-apex violence: *Coup d'état*, palace revolutions, (for example, any number of cases in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East)
- IV. Inter-societal violence that does not threaten the State or the total societal structure.
  - (i) Violence perpetrated by a majority (with or without formal sovereignty) upon a minority; with or without retaliation, through direct action or mediated through police or military), for example, pogroms in Nazi Germany, Bosnia, and in India against Muslims).

- (ii) Reciprocal violence between two groups, (for example, Hindu-Muslim riots in pre-1947 British India)
- (iii) Attacks of a powerful minority on a powerless majority, (for example, Blacks in apartheid South Africa)
- (iv) Agitational forays, usually mass demonstrations that turn violent, then are deflected into situational and sporadic attacks on temporary victims, utilizing rock throwing, looting and burning in addition to killing (for example, Labour strikes and bundhs in India)
- (v) Violence of masses against an elite (for example, peasant revolts against the landlords in India and elsewhere).
- (vi) Criminal assaults of all kinds, both planned and spontaneous, having some utilitarian motive.

The word "riot" is not to be understood in the Western sense as sporadic violence, throwing of brickbats, and the like, but rather a mass attack by an incensed group against the available members of the opposing group. The traditional terminology in Urdu *firqawarana fisadat* or *sampradaykta dange* in Hindi translating as "Hindu-Muslim riots" gives the superficial impression that this form of violence falls under the category IV 2 or "reciprocal violence between two communities." While this was certainly true in British India, it is no longer a valid category for the type of Hindu-Muslim violence in post-independence India. It is better at the outset to consider it false in so far as it concerns the contemporary situation in India. The great bulk of Hindu-Muslim riots belong rather in the category IV 1, that is to say, they are essentially pogroms or massacres perpetrated by a majority upon a defenceless minority. However, before turning to the contemporary scene in greater detail, a historical overview of Hindu-Muslim violence is in order.

### History of Hindu-Muslim Riots

Hindu-Muslim riots have a long history in India. They did

not begin or end with the partition of the country. Many historians believe that relations between Hindus and Muslims during the medieval period were relatively peaceful, if not harmonious and cordial. Despite religious differences, instances of violent confrontations were few and therefore do not provide a pattern. After the fall of the Mogul empire, beginning with the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, violence involving Hindu and Muslim individuals has been recorded. The first reported communal riot took place in Ahmedabad in 1714, centering around Holi celebration and cow slaughter questions. There was a Hindu-Muslim riot in Kashmir in 1719, in Delhi in 1729, in Bombay Province in 1786, occasioned by an attack on a religious procession. Early in the nineteenth century, Banaras witnessed a bloody riot in 1809. The main sources of the conflict was a mosque allegedly built atop a temple by Aurangzeb. Elsewhere in what is now Uttar Pradesh, riots took place at Koil (1820), Moradabad, Sanbhal, Kashipur (1833), Shahjahanpur (1837), Bareilly, Kanpur and Allahabad (1837-52), among other places. According to Christopher Bailey, among the causes of these clashes was the downgrading of Muslim state functionaries and the consequent decline of Muslim dominance, following the British conquest of the area.<sup>2</sup>

The major proximate—though not root—causes of Hindu-Muslim conflict have been cow slaughter and Hindu religious processions<sup>3</sup> playing music<sup>4</sup> in front of mosques during *namaz*, worship. Thus in 1871 Ramanavami and Muharram celebrations coincided and led to riots in Bareilly and Pilibhit. In 1893 major disturbances took place in Azamgarh district over cow slaughter. Behind these riots was the Hindu movement for the protection of the cow. The cow question has been important at least since the middle ages. Emperor Babur in his will explicitly forbade cow slaughter. His grandson Akbar imposed a ban on cow slaughter in the empire in deference to the Hindu sentiment. In 1847 the British banned cow slaughter in Amritsar. During the 1857 uprising, the last Mogul Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar acted similarly. Riots took place in Malabar in 1873, 1885, and 1894, and became known as "Moplah outbreaks". In Mau,

Azamgarh, UP, a dispute between Hindus and Muslims over a government order pertaining to cow slaughter erupted into a bloody riot, which spread to Bihar and then to Bombay Province which included much of what is now Gujarat. In Punjab between 1881-1893, nine cases of riots were reported. Communal riots intensified in the twentieth century. The Government of India in their memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission (1930) mention riots in Bengal in 1907, Peshawar in 1910, Ayodhya in 1912, Agra in 1913, Shahabad, Bihar in 1917, and Katarpur in 1918. The occurrence of the riots further increased in the 1920s, beginning with the Moplah uprising of 1921. There were riots in Malegaon, 1921, Multan, 1922, Lahore, Amritsar, Saharanpur, 1923. Major outbreaks took place in 1924 in Allahabad, Calcutta, Delhi, Gulbarga, Jabalpur, Kohat, Lucknow, Nagpur, and Shahjahanpur to name a few. From 1925, a new cause, namely religious conversion, came to be added to the existing source of conflict. A militant Hindu organization called Arya Samaj launched *shuddhi* (purification) movement of converted Hindus such as Malkana Rajputs of North India, to which the Muslims responded by *Tabligh*, preaching of Islam among the borderline Muslims. These activities increased the scale of intercommunal violence. The major riots of 1925 (in Calcutta) and 1928 (in Bombay) resulted in very large number of casualties and damage to property. Riots continued in the 1930s, with Kanpur topping the list, where nearly 300 people were killed. In the 1940s more ghastly violence occurred as partition and independence neared. The infamous Great Calcutta killing of Hindus (1946) were followed by an equally murderous event in Garh Muktesar in UP in which the victims were Muslims. It is estimated that nearly half a million people perished in the wake of independence as a result of killings in northern India and Bengal.<sup>5</sup> Soon after independence, in September 1948, the Indian army invaded the State of Hyderabad. The pogroms that followed the Indian invasion claimed the lives of 200, 000 Muslims, according to a report compiled by Pandit Sundarlal, a veteran Congressman. The Hyderabad State Congress gangs

were mainly responsible for the ghastly killings<sup>6</sup> as they were in 1984 pogroms against Sikhs in Delhi.

### **Communal Violence Since Independence**

During the colonial period, the nature of the riots was in the category IV 2, or reciprocal violence between two groups, with the British-officered police intervening to restore normalcy. But since the achievement of independence in 1947, the nature of the riots has changed. In every riot since independence, no matter when or where, or how the riots take place, no matter who starts the riots, in the end the victims are mainly Muslims, whether in the numbers of people killed, wounded, or arrested. Economically, it is the poor Muslims whose properties and businesses are destroyed. Why do the riots occur, who engineers them and how? Who are the perpetrators? Why do they take place in some places and not in others? What has been the role of the State and its agencies, the bureaucracy, police, and the intelligence agencies in controlling and preventing riots? What can be done to forecast and prevent further bloodshed? A systematic analysis and discussion of the issue is urgently needed. A detailed investigation of the post-independence riots is thus called for.

After the great killings of 1947-48, the subcontinent returned to peace, although the riots were never totally eliminated as can be seen from the Table below showing the rise of communal riots. The fifties were generally peaceful, except for the bloody riots in eastern India and East Pakistan in 1950, which led to the now forgotten Nehru-Liyaqat Pact on the Indo-Pakistan minorities.<sup>7</sup> Much of India was engaged in the linguistic reorganization of the States so that attention was focussed on intra-linguistic disputes rather than on the Hindu-Muslim question. Another contributing factor was a virtual Muslim withdrawal from competition in the Indian economy. The elite was busy transferring its movable assets to Pakistan and Muslim young men of the middle classes were more inclined to go to Pakistan than to compete within India. The quiet of the 1950s was broken by the Jamshedpur, Rourkela, Jabalpur riots of 1961

The first one—the “*Bhai-Bhai*” approach—views the conflict in terms of ignorance of the followers of Hinduism and Islam about the two religions. If only the Hindus and Muslims knew that all religions are essentially one, and if they approached one another with goodwill, there will be no conflict. Mahatma Gandhi and some “nationalist” Muslims would be the main proponents of this approach.<sup>10</sup> The second strand is represented by the “quest for power” theory of the communal conflict. This theory holds that given the strongly developed communal identities, Hindus and Muslims were bound to come to a conflict over the control of State power, as the acquisition of State power is of primary importance in preserving and promoting the material interests of the respective groups.<sup>11</sup> As the communal leaders sought to achieve power at the expense of the other groups, the two communities frequently clashed leading to violence in the streets. The third theory, according to Humayun Kabir,<sup>12</sup> takes the stand that communal conflict is part of the competitive political process, except that it ought to be rendered free of violence. The argument here is that democracy flourishes when there is group competition. In India, the group structure consists primarily of religious communities and competition between them as well as the constraints they might succeed in imposing upon the state are likely to strengthen democracy.

The Hindu communalist argument asserts that the riots are caused primarily by the Muslim extremists acting on behalf of Pakistan to defame India and to create conditions leading to further dismemberment of the country. Riots, according to the Hindu right, are precipitated by Muslims throwing rocks on the peaceful Hindu processions or places of worship, or Muslims attacking the police and the defence personnel.<sup>13</sup> However, in the post-independence context, the Muslim elites (politicians, social activists, religious leaders, academics, and journalists) believe that anti-Muslim violence is planned and executed to render Muslims economically and socially crippled and as a final outcome of that economic and social backwardness, assimilate them into the lower rungs of Hindu society. This is the conclusion Muslim leaders have drawn because they think that

since physically killing millions of people or expelling them to neighbouring Muslim states is not an option, assimilating them through physical terror and socio-economic deprivation may be the only way of achieving their "final solution."<sup>14</sup> In support of this theory, the following arguments are advanced as to the locale of the riots, role of economic competition, role of the media, politicians, bureaucracy, the police and the military, the planners and perpetrators involved, and the victims. Finally, specific measures are identified to predict and prevent the riots.

### **Locale of the Pogroms**

Most of the pogroms take place where the population is ethnically mixed. Thus the districts where Muslim population is very thin, for example, in coastal Andhra or as in the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, communal violence is unheard of. Similarly, few cases of riots have been noticed in the Muslim-majority districts of Malappuram in Kerala or Murshidabad in West Bengal. From this pattern it appears that when a community is reconciled to its inferior status in population, it avoids confrontation due to greater vulnerability. In most cases so far, riots have tended to occur in urban areas rather than in rural areas, although the expanding communication and transportation systems are seriously affecting villages where police bandobast is reported to be precarious.<sup>15</sup> Industrial cities such as Bombay, Bhiwandi, Baroda, Surat in the west, and Kanpur, Moradabad, and Meerut in the north are obvious examples. Some cities which are both industrial as well as decaying old walled cities such as Delhi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and Bhopal have also seen bloody riots. Industrial cities, where one would think that working class solidarity would be stronger, have not been immune from riots. Cases in point are Jamshedpur, Ranchi, and Rourkela. In some areas riots have occurred repeatedly, while other have had only occasional cases. Cities and towns inhabited by the refugees from Pakistan are prone to riots. This was particularly the case in the 1950s through the 1970s.<sup>16</sup> With the passing away of the first generation of refugees, the factor of negative memories of

migration has receded. However, the factor of refugees from Pakistan has now replaced by the presence of many migrants from Bangladesh. The following table shows "riot-prone areas" where communal violence has taken place regularly:

**Table II**  
**Riot-Prone Areas**

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**Andhra Pradesh:** Adilabad, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Karnul, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Rangareddi.

**Assam:** Cachar, Darrang, Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong.

**Bihar:** Bhagalpur, Bhojpur, Champaran, (East & West ), Darbhanga, Gaya, Giridh, Gopalganj, Hazaribagh, Madhubani, Monghyr, Nalanda, Patna, Purnea, Ranchi, Santhal Pargana, Siwan, Singhbhum, and Sitamarhi.

**Delhi:** Central Delhi, East Delhi, North Delhi.

**Gujarat:** Ahmedabad, Baroda, Banaskantha, Bharuch, Jamnagar, Junagarh, Kheda, Panch Mahals, Sabarkantha, and Surat.

**Kerala:** Cannanore, Mallapuram, Trichur, Trivandrum.

**Karnataka:** Bangalore, Bidar, Dharwar, Gulbarga, Kolar, Mysore, South Kanara.

**Madhya Pradesh:** Bhopal, Chhindwara, Damoh, Indore, Jabalpur, Khandwa, Khargone, Mandsaur, Raigarh, Rajgarh, Raisen, Ratlam, Sagar, Sehore, Seoni, Shajapur, Ujjain, and Vidisha.

**Maharashtra:** Ahmadnagar, Akola, Amravati, Greater Bombay, Buldhana, Nasik, Parbhani, Pune, and Thane.

**Orissa:** Balasore and Cuttack.

**Rajasthan:** Bhilwara, Chitorgarh, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kota, Nagaur, Pali, Udaipur.

**Tamilnadu:** Arcot (North & South), Coimbatore, Dharmapur, Madurai, Ramantapuram, Tirunelveli, and Trichi.

**Uttar Pradesh:** Agra, Aligarh, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Badaun, Bahraich, Banda, Barabanki, Bareilly, Basti, Bijnore, Bulandshahar, Deoria, Faizabad, Fatehnagar, Ghaziabad, Ghazipur, Gonda, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Mathura, Meerut, Moradabad, Muzaffarnagar, Nainital, Pilibhit, Pratapgarh, Rae-Bareilly, Rampur, Saharanpur, Shahjahanabad, Sitapur, Sultanpur, and Varanasi.

**West Bengal:** Calcutta, Murshidabad, Nadia, and 24-Parganas.

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**Source:** *Muslim India* (April 1983): p. 166, quoting the GOI information.



### Economic Competition and Economic Interdependence

As early as 3 September 1954, Nehru confided to his Chief Ministers about the changing nature of the riots:

"There is also a new motive, which, previous to the partition, was not present. This is the lure of property. In the pre-partition days, whatever communal trouble took place, no one ever thought of driving out the other party from their houses or shops. No one ever thought of profiting by any such action. Now this element has come in and is thought that if the Muslims in a particular area are frightened and made to leave, that property would naturally come to the Hindus." <sup>17</sup>

Thus a pattern can be seen for the locale of the riots. Communal riots have occurred more frequently in locations where the economic condition of the Muslims was seen as improving than in places where the economy has remained sluggish. For example, the Jabalpur riot in 1961. The apparent cause of the riot was the elopement of a Hindu girl with a Muslim boy. Although it brought the powerful religio-cultural prejudices between the two communities into play, however, it was not the real reason. The real reason lay elsewhere. The Muslim boy was the son of a local *bidi* magnate who had gradually succeeded in establishing control over the local *bidi* industry. His Hindu competitors were very sore over this development. It was not insignificant that the *bidi* industry belonging to the Muslims in Jabalpur suffered heavily during the riots.<sup>18</sup> In Mango, a locality in Jamshedpur, Bihar, the businesses of Muslims were attacked and looted by hired hoodlums of Adivasi origin acting on behalf of upper caste Hindu merchants envious of their Muslim rivals.<sup>19</sup> A similar pattern is discernible in the Bhiwandi riots of 1970 and 1984. Bhiwandi in Maharashtra is a thriving centre of powerloom industry, with quite a few Muslims own powerlooms and a large number of Muslim artisans work as weavers. The modest prosperity of Muslim powerloom owners aroused the jealousy of some Hindus who were less well-off. Trivial reasons on this occasion, music before mosque, or an alleged insult to Shivaji was used as an excuse to start the riots and ruin Muslim property and businesses.<sup>20</sup> In

neighbouring Gujarat, <sup>21</sup> migrant Sindhi Hindus clashed with their business rivals, the Ganchi Muslims of Godhra, who own a fleet of trucks, in 1980-81.

In North India, similar evidence is available in the pattern of riots. A major riot took place in Moradabad in 1980. Evidently the growing prosperity of Muslim brassware artisans who had moved from workers into entrepreneurs aroused the envy of the Punjabi Hindu middlemen, who felt deprived of their profits when Muslims became direct exporters of brassware to the Middle East. What began as the intrusion of stray pigs into the Idgah in August 1980 turned into a bloody massacre in which the principal victims were Muslims and their businesses. Large townships around Moradabad like Wajidnagar, Mustafabad, and Mahbubnagar built by Muslims became the focus of envy and ready targets.<sup>22</sup> The Hyderabad riots since 1978 have a remarkably similar story. For much of the 1950s through 1960s, the Muslim community there experienced reverse social mobility as a result of India's military operations against the Nizam's Dominion. With the migration of a substantial number of the members of the Muslim middle class to Pakistan in the 1950s and to Western countries in the 1960s, most of the Muslims of the lower middle class went to the oil-rich Arab sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf, especially after the passport liberalization by the Janata Government in 1977. Many Muslims employed in the Gulf recovered their pawned homes, jewellery, and other valuables from the Marwari moneylenders. Muslim prosperity became visible through new or repaired homes, mosques, and a proliferation of *madrasas*. The demonstration effect of Muslims' upward mobility was not lost on some Hindus who did poorly. Again, the immediate causes of riots such as processions, music before mosques or encroachment over religious property were mere pretexts that hid the more substantive reasons leading to the riots.

In the September 1984 riots that toppled Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao from power in Andhra Pradesh, every single Muslim-owned store on Abid Road from the General Post Office all the way to the Tank Bund was destroyed. It is noteworthy that not a

single store owned by a non-Muslim was touched.<sup>23</sup> The method in madness was perfected to the hilt in this instance. Channaraynapatna, a sleepy little town, less than a 100 miles from Bangalore was the scene of a violent riot in January 1983 that destroyed \$1000.00 worth of Muslim businesses.<sup>24</sup> Bhatkal, Karnataka<sup>25</sup> was the site of a fierce riot in which the main targets were Muslim shops and businesses in April 1993. Yet another instance of the destruction of Muslim businesses comes from Old Seelampur in the Union Territory of Delhi. In May 1992, scores of Muslim-owned shops were destroyed.<sup>26</sup> Ever since the first Ahmedabad riots of 1969, every subsequent riot has seen careful planning in targeting Muslim owned shops and businesses. For example, if the Muslim shop was in rented space owned by a Hindu, care was taken by the rioters to only loot or destroy the merchandise, without damaging the building. When the building and the business housing both belonged to a Muslim, the goods were looted and the building gutted.<sup>27</sup>

More examples can be cited, illustrated in the case, for instance, of the Muslim upward mobility in Firozabad, UP (bangle industry); Makrana, Rajasthan, (marble industry); Aligarh, (locks) and so on. In the bloody aftermath of Babari Masjid demolition in December 1992, Muslims all over the country lost millions of rupees as carefully documented by Maqbool Ahmad Siraj, an informed journalist.<sup>28</sup> Credence to Siraj's findings comes from other sources, such as the open support and encouragement the rioters received from the business groups of Birlas, Dalmias, and Bajajs.<sup>29</sup> In the 1992/93 carnage, the shops and businesses belonging to the various sects of Bohras and Khojas were methodically targeted for loot and destruction, so much so that the normally low-profile apolitical Imam of the Khojas, Prince Karim Aga Khan, wrote a strongly-worded letter to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao demanding protection to his followers in Bombay, Surat and elsewhere.<sup>30</sup>

There are cases where economic interdependence as opposed to competition and rivalry has prevented the occurrence of riots. According to P.R. Rajgopal, a retired police officer, "the trading networks of '*tana bana*' or warp and weft in

Varanasi, Aligarh and Meerut among the artisans and weavers who put pressure on the fanatical members of their respective communities to call off the projection of any communal issue as in the process the communities stand to lose economically." <sup>31</sup> Similar reports of interdependence of Hindus and Muslims have appeared from places like Kanpur and Jaipur in 1993 involving gem merchants and skilled workers (cutters and polishers) who happen to be Muslim. <sup>31</sup>

### **Planners, Instigators, and Perpetrators of the Riots**

Who plans and executes the riots? According to Jawaharlal Nehru, in the post-independence period:

Generally speaking, the Muslims do not and cannot think of any deliberate aggressive activity. Both by virtue of their numbers and their general position in the country, they are frustrated and weak and they know well that any aggression on their part will lead to their own suffering. <sup>33</sup>

A careful examination of the major riots reveals that the riots are planned by business rivals, politicians, and criminals depending on who is likely to profit from the riots.

At times, it is the upper caste Hindu politicians who instigate riots in order to divert attention from intra-Hindu conflict over the reservation of jobs and seats in educational institutions as a diversionary move. Since thinly dispersed Muslims lack political muscle to hit back, it is cost-effective to start the riots as the victims are always Muslims. This strategy was implemented with text-book efficiency in the Gujarat riots of 1985 which initially began over the reservation issue and then quickly turned into Hindu-Muslim riots. <sup>34</sup> Sometimes, factional fights within the Congress Party are settled through a Hindu-Muslim riot as happened in 1990 when the anti-Chenna Reddi, (the then Chief Minister) faction of the Congress Party conspired to topple him by discrediting his government in a bloody riot in December 1990. The instigation of the riots is usually left to the frustrated members of the Hindu middle classes who deliver inflammatory speeches, write scurrilous pamphlets, or spread wild rumours through electronic public address systems or

show fictitious video films depicting horror stories of alleged Muslim atrocities. The latest technology has been put to fullest use by the hate mongers.<sup>35</sup> The actual stabbing, killing, looting, burning, and rape is done by the hired criminals, poor lower caste Hindus or Dalits and the members of the Scheduled Castes who hope to benefit from the loot. According to Madhu Kishwar, the editor of *Manushi*, a feminist journal, "in riot after riot, it is the Dalits living in adjacent *bastis* to the Muslims who have been in the forefront of mobs attacking Muslim homes and looting their property. A common refrain of the attackers is "*in par bahot charbi chad gayi hai* —they have accumulated too much fat on their bodies", fat being the symbol of prosperity."<sup>36</sup>

### The Role of the Mass Media in Creating the Environment for Riots

Veena Das, a sociologist has argued that "in order for diffused hostilities to translate themselves into violent conflict, a contiguity has to be established between specific, concrete, and local issues on the one hand, and a master symbol on the other, in terms of which the conflict is viewed in the public consciousness. This may be control over a sacred space, or avenging the death of a leader. This may help us to see the connections between the everyday life of the people engaged in such violence, and the extraordinary events around which narratives of violence are woven."<sup>37</sup> Very often the mass media (especially the TV which was heavily infiltrated by the RSS during L.K. Advani's tenure as the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting in 1977-80) establishes the contiguity between specific local issues and master symbols of national import. The printed media in Hindi and other regional languages has been generally hostile to the Muslims. It routinely publishes stereotypes of Muslims as a violent and fanatical group. Exaggerated stories of Muslim rulers' atrocities in the past and alleged Pakistani misdeeds in the present are highlighted. Particularly virulent is the Hindi, Gujarati, and Marathi press. Thus the Hindi and regional language press creates the environment conducive for the eruption and

escalation of riots. On the other hand, the English language press exercises self-censorship in not publishing the names or the religious affiliation of people killed, wounded, or arrested in the riots. This tends to distort the picture of riots as routine civil strife in which no particular community is the aggressor or the victim. The unwary is thus programmed to think about the riots in terms of conventional ethnic conflict, and not in terms of the majority group being the aggressor in most of the events in connivance with the police, and the minority being the victim in a majority of cases. The code of press conduct outlined in the guidelines of the Press Council of India suggests that in the event of conflicting reports of casualty figures, a lower number is recommended for publication in order not to inflame passions.<sup>38</sup>

### **Role of the Bureaucracy**

The bureaucracy in India is thoroughly communalized. With the departure of the British colonial officers to Britain and an overwhelming majority of top Muslim civil servants to Pakistan, the higher echelons of the bureaucracy has become an upper-caste Hindu preserve. Many of these officers harbour anti-Muslim sentiments. M.N. Buch, a noted civil servant, confessed in print on the pages of *Indian Express* in 1990, "Even today many highly placed Hindus look upon every Muslim as a potential Pakistani. As a District Magistrate more than a quarter of a century ago, I still remember the secret instructions we used to receive from the Government not only to keep a watchful eye on Muslims in any law and order situation, but also to seize even their licensed weapons if the occasion demanded it. No similar instructions were ever received about potential Hindu trouble-makers."<sup>39</sup>

Buch's Statement is confirmed by Kuldeep Nayar, a reputed journalist:

"The biggest wreckage from the demolition of disputed Babari Masjid is the contamination of public servants. Many among them, even at high positions, rationalize and defend what has happened at Ayodhya and after. When they imbibed the Bharatya Janata Party's thinking is difficult to say, they at least now talk in jingoistic terms. It is not an overnight

phenomenon. The RSS has been propagating among them for a long time. Some of them have attended its meetings and some have been taken in by their argument that the Hindus have been pushed [around] for too long." <sup>40</sup>

It does not take great deal of imagination to understand how the RSS-influenced bureaucrats behave in riot situation. A District Magistrate (DM) in Bihar was taken aback to see his colleague prepare a deputation list that excluded the handful of Muslim police officers from active duty in a town suffering from riots. <sup>41</sup> The scandalous removal of Aftab Ahmad Khan, a widely respected police officer from active charge during the Bombay pogrom lends further credibility to the Bihar DM's claim. <sup>42</sup>

#### **Tainted Uniforms: The Role of the Police, Paramilitary, and the Army**

In most of the riots, the role of the police is usually partisan. Instead of stopping the riots, the police has been found in a majority of the cases to have in fact helped the rioters. The Madon Commission which inquired into the the 1970 communal riots in Bhiwandi, Malad, and Jalgaon in Maharashtra observed that "the Special Investigation Squads set up to investigate the crimes committed in the course of this riot had acted in a biased manner against one community. <sup>43</sup> The partisan role of the Provincial Armed Constabulary of UP in the riots of Moradabad (1980)<sup>44</sup> and Meerut (1987) <sup>45</sup> has been well documented and has justifiably invited international condemnation. In both cases the militia murdered hundreds of unarmed Muslims in totally unprovoked aggression. The Rajasthan Armed Constabulary's partisan conduct in Jaipur riots of 1990-92 is on record. <sup>46</sup> The Bihar Military Police (BMP) reputation is badly sullied given its partisan role on numerous occasions in Bihar. The BMP is called *Military Police* because its ammunition was on a par to a certain extent with the regular army and therefore different from the ordinary State police. Its role in the Jamshedpur riots of April 1979 is chillingly described by an eyewitness:

"On April 11 and 12, the first two worst days of rioting, the BMP and State police forces had a field day. It looked as if the Bihar Military Police were commanded by some RSS officer.

The BMP forces went into action just a few hours after the outbreak of violence, driving into Muslim *bustees* in a deliberate, pick-and-hit style."<sup>47</sup>

A decade later nothing changed, as the BMP repeated its performance in the Bhagalpur bloodbath of 1989.<sup>48</sup> In the nation's capital, the police willfully attacked unarmed Muslims during the massacres after the Hindu militants razed the Babari Masjid to the ground. According to a report by Delhi Medicos and Scientists Front, a group of physicians: "

The police systematically laid siege to Mustafa and Usmani mosques in North-East Delhi. They shot at people, killed, maimed and brutalized people in prayer. Organized mobs attacked from two sides... The police closed in from the third side and indulged in killing, looting, and molestation of women. In conclusion, it was police with arms versus helpless Muslims."<sup>49</sup>

In 1991 Varanasi and Aligarh Muslims faced the wrath of the PAC in a similar fashion.<sup>50</sup> In Mewat, Gurgaon the same story was repeated about the same time, where correspondent Harinder Baweja heard the unanimous Muslim statement, "we fear the police."<sup>51</sup>

The most outrageous example to date about police aggression against defenceless Muslims came during the Bombay pogrom from a variety of neutral, foreign, and non-Muslims sources. According to Ravi Nair, Director of South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre, "the overwhelming majority of the people killed by police were Muslims. Somehow the police bullet hits the Muslims, not the Hindus."

Nair's report, based on news media reports of official statistics, underscores a litany of anecdotal accounts of police misbehavior in the aftermath of the Ayodhya mosque demolition."<sup>52</sup> Nair's findings found affirmation in *The New York Times* India correspondent Edward Gargan's dispatch which found "day after day after day, for nine days and nights beginning on January 6, 1993, mobs of Hindus rampaged through this city, killing and burning people only because they were Muslims. No Muslim was safe—not in the slums, not in high-rise apartments, not in the city's bustling offices—in an



orgy of violence that left 600 people dead and 2000 injured." Interviews have suggested, moreover, that the killing, arson and looting were far from random. In fact they were organized by Hindu gangs, abetted by the Bombay police, and directed at Muslim families and businesses. The extent of police cooperation with the Hindu mobs appears to have spread through the entire police force, excluding only the most senior officers. Transcripts of conversations between the police control room and officers made available to *The New York Times* "... show that the officers at police headquarters repeatedly told constables in the field to allow Muslim homes to burn and to prevent aid from reaching victims. Throughout the nine days of rioting...neither the Maharashtra authorities nor the Central Government in New Delhi made any effort to stench the flow of blood." <sup>53</sup> The sensational conversations between police officers during the pogrom taped by a young female journalist Teesta Setalvad reveal "that law enforcement agencies virtually participated in and some cases instigated riots against Muslims." <sup>54</sup> The Bombay police role was condemned by Amnesty International of London as well as the Asia Watch. <sup>55</sup>

Most often the police intelligence has either failed to forecast a possibility of riot occurrence or willfully suppressed indication of riot possibility from the authorities concerned. The police finds it hard to successfully apprehend and prosecute those who are involved in riots, therefore the deterrent effect is low, especially because the police itself is a party to the crime. The miniscule Muslim presence in the police ranks makes the task of the killers and looters easier. Kuldip Nayar has seen Hindu temples within police areas in many parts of the country, which suggests the lack of Muslims in the law enforcement agencies. <sup>56</sup> Absence of Muslims colleagues can often mean that police jawans do not see Muslims as fellow citizens but rather as enemies from across the borders. In the favorite terminology of the Indian press, many in the police see Muslims as Bangladeshi and Pakistani "infiltrators", to be hunted down and pushed across the national frontiers.

The role of the army is less tarnished than that of the police and the paramilitary, although the army itself is reluctant to get involved in internal security matters which it rightly considers to be the civilian domain. During the 1947 riots, Maulana Azad noted that "before partition the army had been free from communal hatred. When the country was divided... the communal virus entered the army. The majority of troops in Delhi were Hindus and Sikhs. In a few days it became clear that it might prove too great a strain on them if strong action was to be taken for the restoration of law and order in the city. We therefore took measures to bring more soldiers from the South. They had not been affected by the partition of the country and retained their sense of soldierly discipline. The soldiers of the South played a great part in bringing the situation under control and restoring order in the capital."<sup>57</sup> Azad's remarks about North Indian troops were proven correct in the case of Indian military operations against Hyderabad State in 1948. There the Congress gangs perpetrated a bloody pogrom of Muslims while the soldiers looked the other way or in some cases aided the aggressors.<sup>58</sup>

India's three wars with Pakistan contributed to the communalization of its armed forces as exemplified by an Indian general's characterization of Indo-Pakistan wars as "communal riots with armor."<sup>59</sup> Over time the wounds of partition healed in the army and the bravery and patriotism of Muslim officers and jawans during India's wars with neighbours helped to remove army misgivings about the minorities. During a number of riots, Muslim leadership pleaded with the government to deploy the army to protect Muslims as against the discredited police.<sup>60</sup> The army is generally perceived as efficient and impartial. On the negative side, the army cannot always remain immune from developments in the Indian society. The perennial Hindu-Muslim riots in all parts of the country, the ethnic insurgencies in Kashmir, Panjab, and Assam strengthen communal minded Hindus. The refusal of the top army brass to come to the aid of the civil authorities during the Hindu agitation against Babari Masjid in 1989 appears to suggest that the army is being affected

by the prevailing anti-Muslim environment. According to *Economic and Political Weekly*

"It is reported that in October [1990] when the UP administration sought to explore possibilities of deploying the army to protect the Babari Masjid from the Hindu fanatic marauders, the army brass let it be known that their jawans could not be trusted since the majority of them were Hindus who when going on military operations shouted *Sia Ram* and *Jai Bajrangbali*. How could they then be expected to resist Hindu *karsevaks* who shouted the same slogans when attempting to storm the Babari mosque? <sup>61</sup>

After the demolition of the Babari Masjid in December 1992, "a report placed before the Parliament said the [BJP administration in UP] did not use troops at its disposal to control the 200, 000 people what gathered in Ayodhya, despite constant pressure from New Delhi," to which a BJP member of parliament (a retired army officer), Jaswant Singh retorted that "a Hindu confrontation with the government could affect India's largely Hindu army." <sup>62</sup> The army brass' attitude on the mosque starkly contrasts with their ability to use overwhelming force against the alleged Sikh terrorists in the Golden Temple at Amritsar in June 1984 as well as against the Kashmiri militants since 1990.

That the army has its share of anti-Muslim fanatics was revealed during the national election of 1991 when 25 top ex-officers joined the BJP. <sup>63</sup> About the same time, reports appeared in the Indian press about training being given to the RSS volunteers by the retired members of the services. <sup>64</sup> The gang-rape of Muslim women by the army personnel in Kashmir verified by Indian human rights organizations raise further concern about the anti-Muslim feeling in a segment of the armed forces. Similarly, a private quarrel between an army jawan and a relative of a Muslim police officer led to what *Radiance* characterized as a "mini Police Action" in Hyderabad. *Police Action*, actually the military operation code named Operation Polo against the Nizam's Dominions in 1948, evokes images, memories, and meanings to Muslims what Operation Blue Star does to the Sikhs. On 3, February 1994, furious jawans of the 9th

Garhwal Rifles went berserk in Muhammadi Lines area of Hyderabad and burned down nine house belonging to Muslims in retaliation for an alleged killing of two children of an army jawan, according to the report of Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Union.<sup>65</sup> That the jawans were taking law and order into their own hands to no public outcry indicates the extent of Muslim vulnerability. It is unlikely that the army men would have behaved the way they did had the suspects been non-Muslims.

The atmosphere in the armed forces contributes to anti-Muslim feelings. For instance, many of the battle cries like *Har Har Mahadev* [Shivaji's slogan], *Bajrang Bali ki Jai*, *Bol Javala Man ki Jai* prevalent in the army are the kinds used by Hindu mobs attacking Muslims, which serves to rouse anti-Muslim sentiments.<sup>66</sup> The Chief of the Army Staff Gen. B.C. Joshi issued his own "ten commandments" in 1993 which included quotations only from the *Vedas* and "a Hindu sense of commitment" which he labels as the "path of the Dharma".<sup>67</sup> That the General was citing the scriptures of only one religion was not deemed inappropriate for the head of the army of a proclaimed secular State. The kinds of questions asked during an examination at the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Doon seem to suggest that the RSS-minded personnel have seized control of that military academy. Candidates for the IMA were asked to identify who was Golwalker (a former RSS chief), the thoughts of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (another RSS-Jana Sangh leader), and similar other questions about the Hindu extremist parties.<sup>68</sup>

Because the communal riots are rarely against the State, the governments are often reluctant to use strong force to suppress the riots. That communal conflict involves one community against another rather than against the government reduces the threat riots pose to political stability as such. Only when group violence is directed against the State as in the cases of the Naxalite, Sikh, Mizo, and Naga insurgencies in different States does the government act swiftly and decisively with overwhelming force of the army. In February 1993, the authorities in New Delhi used massive force to prevent a BJP

rally from taking place, including deliberately leaking the news that army had been alerted.<sup>69</sup> The reason why the government acts differently when the violence is directed against the Muslims should be sought in that community's lack of muscle either through population concentration, political clout or resources in wealth. The utter disorganization of Muslims overseas and their weakness despite enormous wealth in the Arab world fails to act as a deterrent on India. The riots remain unchecked due a lack of international advocacy of Muslim safety in the world forums. For instance, the London-based Minority Rights Group, which has published several reports on minorities all over the world, including ones on the Sikhs and Nagas, adamantly refuses to do so in the case of Indian Muslims. The American Jewry successfully accomplished large scale immigration of the Soviet Jews to Israel during the Cold War by pressuring Moscow through Washington. Nothing remotely comparable has been done by the Islamic States. With no possibility of punitive measures against the rioters, the riots occur with a pattern of the following order:

**A. The Pre-Riot State:**

- 1) Rival claims over a sacred site, alleged infiltration of Muslims from Bangladesh or Pakistan.
- 2) Organized activities such as processions and inflammatory speeches by communal leaders in the days or week preceding the riots. These may be accompanied by deliberately provocative and dramatic gestures such as the ceremonial breaking of coconut to the Hindu deities, unfurling of saffron flags, or the installation of idols.
- 3) A process of rumour mongering and demonization of rival group, such as highly exaggerated and often fabricated accounts of the oppression and torture of coreligionists at the hands of the enemies, a process greatly helped by biased newspaper accounts and videos. Alleged atrocities of the Muslims in the distant

past as well as in contemporary times in the subcontinent are played up to arouse emotions. Rumours of illegal cow slaughter, or the slogan of "Pakistanis are coming", to frighten the Hindus. Hate graffiti appears on the walls demanding Muslims to go to Pakistan or to *qabristan*, graveyard.

- 4) Parades by the para-military and secret organizations such as the RSS and the Shiv Sena.

#### B. The Rioting Situation:

- 5) Riots are triggered off by the alleged desecration of a Hindu temple or a scripture, music before mosques, throwing of coloured water, (*gulal*) over the resentful Muslims, elopement of a Hindu woman with a Muslim or vice-versa, and the like.
- 6) Partisan role of the police and the para-military forces dominated by the members of the majority community either through inaction or open support to the rioters and often even active initiative in armed attacks against defenceless Muslims.
- 7) The brunt of the violence suffered by the minority community.
- 8) Pleas of peace, calling of a peace meeting between Hindu and Muslim leaders and the police officials.

#### C. The Post-Riot Stage

- 9) Judicial commission of inquiry generally resulting in an objective report of high quality, Muslim organizations begin collecting funds for helping the victims.
- 10) The shelving of the report without further action while the individuals and the organizations responsible for instigating and perpetrating the riots roam about freely awaiting the next opportunity to create trouble.

What is needed, therefore, is a set of practical guidelines of long term and short term application that ought to be implemented immediately. There is probably no additional need of legislation. Existing laws are sufficient to cope with the riots.

### Short-term Measures

For the immediate suppression of riots once they have occurred there is no escape from the use of overwhelming force of police or military. One of the few riot-prone states that remained relatively free from violence after the sack of Babari Masjid was Bihar. Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav, who was widely credited for the peace in his state explained how this was accomplished: "You have to be rough and tough. I arrested all the *kar sevaks* the moment they entered my state. So they could not go back to their villages and incite violence. I also called all SHOs and DMs (district magistrates) and warned them that they would be sacked immediately, if any rioting occurred in areas under their jurisdiction... I made sure that there was no confusion in their minds that I would hold them personally responsible if any flare-up occurred and this toughness worked... At the same time the political will of the state government was clear." <sup>70</sup> A presupposition for police impartiality is its ethno-religious composition. So it is hard to improve upon Khushwant Singh's suggestion in 1969 that

"The only thing to do is to draft a substantial numbers of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians and Parsis into our police forces. Let the police force of Kashmir be largely non-Muslim, that of Punjab, Haryana be largely non-Sikh and non-Hindu. In all other States between 20-25 per cent should be Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Parsi, and Anglo-Indian... We must immediately enact laws empowering local administrators to declare zones where communal passions have been inflamed as 'affected'. Thereafter officers with special powers should be entitled to ignore ordinary rules of legal procedures (as under martial law), arrest likely mischief-makers, order public flogging of those caught in the act of making mischief, impose and realize collective fines from residents of localities where such mischief takes place, and pass sentences of imprisonment or death on those known to have committed violence or murder... Let us abandon for ever the practice of instituting commissions of enquiry into the causes of riots... Reports are not always published [or when published are] usually consigned to the archives. And as we have learnt from bitter

experience, the Government never acts upon their recommendations." <sup>71</sup>

A similar but more elaborate set of proposals have been submitted to the Union Ministry of Internal Affairs by Syed Shahabuddin,<sup>72</sup> namely:

*Police Force:* at the national/state level should in general be so restructured to reflect the demographic composition and have adequate representation of the minorities. Apart from this an anti-riot force should be constituted, with at least 50 per cent representation of the minorities, SC/ST, and should be posted within striking distance of riot-prone districts. The government must follow a deliberately composite pattern in posting of magistrates and deploying police personnel in the riot-prone districts.

*Senas:* All senas and other communal organizations with a record of mischief must be banned under the general law of the land without waiting for any additional legislation.

*Religious Processions:* Only those religious processions should be allowed which have a tradition behind them, for example, if they existed according to police records on 15 August 1947. New processions, which invariably have a political motivation should not be permitted.

As far as possible old routes must be maintained and change should be permitted only with the consent of communities residing along the proposed route. The licensees of the procession must undertake not to exhibit objectionable *jhankis*, raise provocative placards or make inflammatory speeches.

Apart from the police bandobast along the route, video cameras should be installed at sensitive points to deter mischief.

All places of worship on the routes should, if necessary, be searched in advance for collection of arms or stones and given police protection.

*Use of Loudspeakers:* A national consensus should be developed against the use of loudspeakers at night, say, between 10 PM to 5 AM for religious purposes with no



exception whatsoever for any community. Except for *azan* from mosques, loud speakers must be played at low volume in order to reach the congregation which is largely limited to the religious premises as distinct from outside.

*Communal Publications:* The Ministry of Home Affairs of every State Government should have a cell to monitor such publications with the help of investigative agencies and take action against the authors, publishers and printers of communal nature. Communal wall writings as well as literature in local circulation including leaflets and posters should be monitored by the administrative/intelligence machinery.

*Civil Liberty and Human Rights Organizations:* Voluntary organizations like civil liberties or human rights organizations should be encouraged to take cases of atrocities by one community against another or by the police against anyone. Peace committees should be constituted at the state, district and the local level in riot-prone states or districts. District or local committee should be called into session as soon as a conflict situation arises, before the tension builds up. The State Committee should be convened if violence leads to loss of life. The National Integration Council's Standing Committee on Communal Violence should visit the scene of communal violence, if violence continues unabated for more than a week.

*Riot Control Plan:* Every riot-prone district should have a riot-control plan. All existing points of local conflict should be monitored and every effort should be made to resolve or reconcile them, with the help of local/district peace committees. The calendar of religious events including processions along with their traditional routes should be finalized at the beginning of the year.

#### **Post-Riot Action: Compensation for Loss of Life and Property**

The State should pay full compensation for the loss of life, limb and property in all cases of societal violence. A law should

be enacted for the payment of appropriate compensation and make it a statutory right.

#### **Repair of Places of Worship**

Places of worship or of religious significance destroyed or damaged should be immediately rebuilt at government expense.

#### **Punitive Fines**

Punitive fines should be imposed with the village or ward as the unit on all residents in proportion to their assets in order to raise an amount equal to the amount payable as compensation for the losses in lives or property.

#### **Penal Action Against Police**

Police personnel guilty of atrocities or partisanship should be immediately suspended or prosecuted.

#### **Screening Committee**

Screening committees of the local MP, the local MLAs, the Commissioner of Police, the IG/DIG and the District Judge should review the role of the District Magistrate/Collector and Superintendent of Police and of the administration and the police machinery in general during the riot and submit a confidential report to the State government, on the basis of which action may be taken against officers if necessary.

#### **Judicial Inquiry**

Societal violence which leads to loss of life in the riots or by police firing must be subjected to judicial inquiry as a matter of course.

#### **Screening of the Arrested**

The cases of those arrested or detained during the riots must be reviewed at the highest level as soon as the riot is brought under control and persons with no criminal background and against whom there are no specific charges should be immediately released.

### Prosecution

Special *thanas* should be established and investigation should be undertaken by a special investigating team deputed by the state government. Special prosecutors must be appointed from outside the district. Special courts should be set up or district judges should be earmarked by the High Court to take up riot cases on a priority basis.

### Citizens' Voluntary Action

Finally, there is great potential for communal harmony through voluntary action groups. Throughout the country, voluntary organizations have sprang up that hold public meetings, plays, sporting events, non-denominational folk festivals, and musical events which bring people of different faiths together and keep the hot heads in check. The cross-pressures created through networking can effectively block stereotyping and prejudices against members of the other group. In many a town this kind of activity has brought the civil administration and police in a public forum. Local level arrangements for peace through membership in sports clubs, trade unions, professional organizations, and the like is likely to be an effective deterrence where the law enforcement agencies have failed. Around New Delhi, "in villages outlying the capital, Jat and Gujjar chieftains, normally uncaring about what happens outside their own little fiefdoms, have banded together to thwart the designs of BJP MP Madan Lal Khurana to evict Bangladeshis."<sup>73</sup> Similarly in Varanasi, when some Hindu extremists began to create a controversy about the local mosques, "the powerful traders' lobby [Varanasi Textile Industry] intervened. The traders, who are 70 per cent Hindus and the rest Muslims, do not want to see violence erupt in their own backyard, especially since business interests are inextricably linked... It put advertisements in the local papers disassociating themselves from the controversy."<sup>74</sup> Constant communications and joint committees comprising of the police and citizens successfully prevented recurrence of riots in chronically

riot-prone town of Meerut and Bhiwandi during and immediately after the Babari Masjid demolition.<sup>75</sup> Movie stars of Bombay have also taken the initiative to restore communal harmony, something that was largely the province of Gandhians and civil liberties organizations,<sup>76</sup> which augurs well for the country.

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### Chapter 3

## Muslims in Indian Economy

Speaking about the Muslim condition in Hindustan after the 1857 uprising against the colonial power, Maulana Altaf Husain Hali complained

ذابل حکومت کے ہمراز ہیں ہم      نہ درباریوں میں سرفراز ہیں ہم  
نہ علوں میں شایانِ اعزاز ہیں ہم      نہ صنعت میں معرفت میں ممتاز ہیں ہم  
نہ رکھتے ہیں کچھ منزلت و کاری میں      نہ حصہ ہمارا ہے سوداگری میں

Maulana Hali's Couplets in Roman Urdu

Na ahl-i hukumat ke hamraz hain ham  
Na darbarion main sarfaraz hain ham  
Na ilmaon main shayan-i izzat hain ham  
Na sanat main hurfat main mumtaz hain ham  
Na rakhte hain kuch manzilat naukri main  
Na hissa hai hamara hai saudagari main.

We (i.e. Muslims) are not trusted by the government,  
Nor are we among the prominent courtiers or the ruler  
Neither are we among the educated elite  
We have no share in trade or the industry  
Nor do you found us in the civil services  
Or among the businesses.

Many observers of the Muslim society may claim that Hali's lamentation of the Muslim condition is true even a century after

it was written. However, a detailed examination may reveal that while some of what Hali said is true, it is not a faithful picture in its entirety.

Any attempt at the analysis of the Muslim share in the Indian economy in a scientific manner is impeded by a dearth of empirical data. No statistics are available to show the number of Muslim peasants and workers involved in the agricultural sector or the number of Muslim factory workers engaged in the industrial sector. Some statistics—not always satisfactory—are available about the social background of the civil servants at the state and national level. The religious and ethnic background of the jawans and officers of the Indian armed forces, once an important focus of Muslim careers, is considered information pertaining to the order of battle and is, therefore, classified. No statistical data exists anywhere about the per capita income, expenditure, savings, employment, underemployment, and unemployment rates, living conditions, ownership of housing and lands, and the like. Information that compares the employment and non-employment pattern of various groups and communities is also conspicuous by its absence.

During the colonial period, the Census of India published data on the educational and economic levels of some population groups, but this has been discontinued since the independence owing to the Indian state's policy of not showing differential development pattern of the various segments of the Indian society, except the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. It is still possible to find the numbers of Muslims and other religious groups employed by the state and the Centre, since every application form for government jobs requires the candidate to reveal his/her religious affiliation. A casual glance at the job advertisement in the newspaper will testify that among other information, a column for religious affiliation is always present. Presumably this information is indeed gathered or can be readily made available if the state is willing to disclose it. Not only that the religious affiliation of current and past employees can be actually obtained, but in fact the same data for unsuccessful candidates can also be revealed to show pattern of failure across

time and space. The Indian governments are of course unwilling to do so for it may be politically embarrassing.

In the absence of primary empirical data, the foregoing discussion of the Muslim position in the Indian economy is based on information in an occasional survey of the census, sociological studies, and economic studies of Indian Muslims done by academics, Muslim voluntary organizations, and journalists. For the purpose of studying Muslim participation in the national economy, one has to look at the minority participation in each sector : agriculture, industry, and the tertiary sector.

### Muslims in the Agricultural Sector

Contrary to the popular belief reinforced by uninformed journalists, Muslims—even in Hindustan and the Deccan regions—live, by and large in rural areas of the country. It is only *comparatively* that they are more urban than are the Hindus. As a rural community, the Muslim peasantry is the largest segment in the Muslim community in the country. Not all Muslims living in the rural areas are necessarily agriculturalists. A large number are artisans and menials who do participate in agricultural activities during the busy portion of agriculture season and occasionally themselves own land which they cultivate but their main occupation is nonagricultural. Like other segments of Muslim society, the Muslim peasantry also falls into different categories according to the size of landholding, the area of habitation, and the general characteristics of the agricultural growth of those areas since independence. So far as one can generalize about a group so vast and dispersed, it does not seem that the economic conditions of the Muslim peasantry has improved greatly during the last four decades or so, over and above the general improvement that may have accrued to the group as a result of the general rise in the prices of agricultural commodities and the price of land.

A number of factors have affected the agricultural sector since the last four decades. These include better strains of seeds,



chemical fertilizers, irrigation improvement, tube wells, and some mechanization exemplified by the introduction of tractors in the areas of the Green Revolution. The Green Revolution in India heralded a radical change in agricultural productivity and transformed the peasants into capitalist farmers. However, the Green Revolution has had little impact on the Muslim peasantry except in western Uttar Pradesh. The revolution has been largely a result of a breakthrough in wheat cultivation, and the economic prosperity it generated has been confined to the so-called wheat-growing areas. The Muslim peasantry, which is concentrated, by and large, in the rice-growing areas where traditional agriculture still dominates did not, thus, have the situational advantage that has brought economic prosperity to the areas located in the green revolution zones, and its economic condition has, therefore, remained largely unaffected. Moreover, the Muslim peasantry in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka inhabits semi-arid districts in the region of Telangana and the Rayalaseema (in AP), Marathwada (Maharashtra) and the Hyderabad Karnataka of the erstwhile Nizam's Dominion that are historically subject to famine conditions. Unless a radical advance is made in tank irrigation system or a breakthrough materializes in the rice cultivation, no improvement can be expected in the lot of the peasantry in rice cultivation areas —Muslim or otherwise.

The absence of a breakthrough in rice cultivation is an overriding constraint that applies to the peasantry outside the green revolution belts as a whole. Given this overall constraint, the general process of agricultural development has brought into operation certain factors which have had a bearing upon the economic conditions of the peasants. Chief among them are the introduction of better varieties of seeds, chemical fertilizers, tube wells, advanced irrigation systems, new agricultural machinery and equipment, and the commercialization of agriculture. All of these factors have had a positive impact upon the economic

conditions of the peasantry, and it seems that the Muslim peasantry has benefited like other peasants.

Unfortunately, no data specific to Muslims is available to assess the impact of and the responses to the agricultural development. Such data as are available, suggests a positive impact of agricultural modernization on the Muslim peasantry. However, the positive effect of these developments has been limited to rich peasants who had both the initial capital to adopt the new techniques of farming as well as the enterprise to experiment with them. These peasants easily underwent the transition from peasant to farmer, obtained tube-wells and new agricultural technology, used new varieties of seeds and began producing cash or additional crops for commercial purposes. Unlike the rich peasants, the poor and middle level peasants have not been able to take much advantage of the progress in agricultural equipment or better quality seeds to increase production. There has not been a noticeable change in the agricultural techniques employed by these peasants. Occasionally, they have experimented with chemical fertilizers or iron ploughs, but the lack of irrigation facilities or their inability to acquire improved quality of livestock has deterred large scale adoption of agricultural technology. Sometimes, the fragmentation of land holdings has often made such investments uneconomical for many peasants.

The poor agricultural output following their inability to use modern agricultural technology has constrained small and medium peasants to take to other part-time jobs in many areas in order to supplement their income from agriculture. A major part-time activity in many instances is industrial work or shop keeping. A sociologist reporting her findings from Karnataka says:

"...the fact that Muslims seem to have remained on the fringe of the society has made them more versatile. Their greater enterprise cannot be explained by a lack of interest in the land, for they, like the Wangla peasants, are small landowners.

Many of my peasant informers regarded a shop as a gold mine. When I enquired why they themselves did not open shops, they insisted emphatically that it would never do a peasant to squat on the floor of his shop and offer goods, to passers-by, who might be of lower castes or even untouchables. 'A Muslim can do this, but not a peasant.' They also claimed that if a peasant opened a shop (and there in fact are two caste shops in the village), he could never make money like a Muslim shopkeeper, because a peasant was expected to be charitable and therefore obliged to sell goods on credit, a Muslim need not do this.<sup>1</sup>

The findings from Karnataka noted above are confirmed by an example from another state. Chelia Muslims, the once impoverished farmers of north Gujarat have become synonymous with successful restaurant business in western India.<sup>2</sup>

In the absence of annual or even decennial socio-economic data along religious lines, researches are dependent on occasional surveys. One such survey was conducted by National Samples Survey Organization, (NSSO). NSSO is probably the most scientific and dependable source of data on various types of social and economic information for both state and local levels. These surveys are conducted on a sample of households round the year and every year, often with a special focus. The forty-third round surveyed about 1.3 lakh households spread over about 8400 sample villages and 4600 urban sample blocks in the country. In its 43rd round survey conducted during 1987-88, the NSSO came up with interesting findings on Muslims and others. As presented in the Table III below, in rural India, about 44 per cent of Hindus undertake agricultural occupations as opposed to only 36 per cent of Muslims. However, 22 per cent of rural Muslims undertake non-agricultural and non-labour occupations as opposed to only 12 per cent of Hindus. Nevertheless, over one third of both religious population work as agricultural/manual labourers in rural areas.<sup>3</sup>

**Table III**  
**Distribution of Persons by Household Type (Occupation) and**  
**Religion, Rural India 1987-88**

(in percentage)

<i>Area in acres</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>Others</i>
Agriculture	43.9	36.3	37.9	38.6
Non-agricultural	11.7	21.2	10.9	22.9
Agricultural	28.3	24.4	28.4	21.7
Other Labour	8.3	9.9	10.9	4.6
Other Occupation	7.9	8.1	11.9	12.3

Source: NSS 43rd Round, 1987-880 Table 27r (Page. 56).

Note : Distribution of population who are included under a certain category based on the household to which they belong. These percentages do not represent employment levels.

In some States the percentage of Muslims in non-agricultural occupations is much higher than the national average. For example, a study conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bangalore covering 245 villages in Karnataka district of Tumkur, in 1982 indicated that as much as 59 per cent of Muslims are engaged in non-agricultural occupations such as labourers, artisans, menials, professionals and salaried workers. Only 41 per cent of Muslims were involved in direct cultivation.<sup>4</sup> In neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, a 1989 study showed a staggering 82 per cent Muslims in non-agricultural occupations.<sup>5</sup> This pattern of employment is different from UP and Bihar, which show a much greater per centage of Muslims in agricultural occupations.

The finding mentioned here may not be applicable elsewhere, but there is little doubt that the medium and small peasants have had to take recourse to economic activities outside the agricultural sector in order to improve their lot. Agricultural development of the last four decades has not benefited these classes as has been the case with the rich peasants.

### Muslim Landed Gentry

Historically, the land owned by the noble families came to them as grants from the Mogul emperor in Hindustan and the Nizams of Hyderabad in the Deccan as a reward for some conspicuous service in civil or military spheres. The actual involvement of the aristocracy with the land, however, was both distant and peripheral. Many of the landlords in the Deccan, for instance, had not even once visited their *jagirs* in their lifetime. Others knew only vaguely where their lands were or the quantity of the agricultural output or the condition of the people who lived on them. They did not even know the amount of income which their *jagirs* yielded. That it was ample was enough to keep in mind, though keeping it so got many of them into trouble. Not knowing one's income is a great way to live beyond it, and many of them did, steadily or occasionally. Their relationship with the lands usually did not extend beyond extracting economic benefits from it in the form of annual revenue collection through a number of intermediaries (the *payrokars* in Hyderabad) who leased out the land to the tenants and cultivators. This system assumed several different forms and names, for example, *jagirdari* system in the Deccan and the *zamindari* system in Hindustan. The common feature of the system was the dependence of the aristocracy, usually living in towns and cities, upon the land without directly cultivating it.

This system of absentee landownership was abolished in Hyderabad in 1949 and 1950 in Uttar Pradesh. This measure is said to have cut at the very root of the power and prestige of the landed aristocracy and brought about an immediate deterioration in its social and economic condition. However, closer examination reveals that, the economic effects of the abolition of the *jagirdari/zamindari* system upon the Muslim landed aristocracy and upon the Muslims as whole seem to have been somewhat exaggerated. Objective evidence of the transformation wrought by the legislative enactments suggests that its consequences were not quite as far-reaching and widespread as had been anticipated. Ali Muhammad Khusro,

who made a special study of its social and economic effects in Hyderabad noted, for example, that the abolition of the jagirdari system itself

does not seem to have brought about any significant change in the pattern of landholdings, though the impact of tenancy legislation on this pattern is a more open question. According to the household enquiry, inam lands continued to constitute about 9 per cent and patta lands 91 per cent of the total ownership holdings in both years 1948-49 and 1953-54. Mortgaged land at less than 1/2 per cent of the total ownership holdings also remained static. Nor was there much change in the proportion of owner cultivated and base cultivated land in total cultivation holding, the former accounting for about 83 per cent and the latter about 17 per cent of the total. Thus the impact of tenancy legislation may be expected at best to be limited to only 17 per cent of the total cultivated acreage, and the deviations from the ryotwari system, in the sense of divorce between ownership and cultivation could only be seen on a small per centage of land.<sup>6</sup>

The situation was not particularly different in other parts of the country where *jagirdari/zamindari* tenures existed. There were several reasons for the limited impact of the land reform laws. Perhaps the most significant reason was that the provisions of the legislation, though quite rigorous, had become an open secret even before the enactment came into effect, and landlords could take the necessary steps to evade its provisions.

The difference between individual landlords and their links with the tenants and the land also affected their ability to evade the legislation. There were big landlords owning vast tracts of land, often as large as some of the princely States, as exemplified by the cases of Paigah nobility in Hyderabad and the *rajās* of various principalities in Uttar Pradesh. The smaller landlords owned no more than a few hundred acres. There were landlords whose relations with the cultivators and tenants were exploitative and hostile as well as others whose ties with the cultivating tenants and agricultural laborers were largely harmonious. Each of these segments of the landed aristocracy was affected by the land reforms in a different way, and its

ability to take suitable measures to defeat the purpose of the legislation was differently conditioned.

Based on their different responses to the abolition of the *jagirdari/zamindari* systems, the landlords can be divided into at least three distinct groups. The first segment comprised the urban Muslim aristocracy whose members were essentially absentee landlords maintaining a marginal or tenuous link with their *zamindaris* or *jagirs* through a series of intermediaries who were directly responsible for extorting agricultural rents from the cultivating tenants. The dealings of the intermediaries of such city-based Muslim aristocratic families with the cultivating tenants were by and large exploitative and they were not able to anticipate the impending changes that were coming with the abolition of the *jagirdari/zamindari* systems. Even where they were able to foresee the legislative measures they were unable to do very much about it, since their exploitative dealings with the cultivating tenants stood in the way of their securing the cooperation of their tenants for satisfactory manipulative strategies. In the case of such families, the impact of the *jagirdari/zamindari* abolition was much more sudden and direct than on other categories. Muslim aristocratic families in this category found their real resources slipping out of their hands and they were powerless to prevent losses. Nor was there much time for them to convert their immobile wealth in more secure and tangible economic assets. The economic effect of the *jagirdari/zamindari* abolition on such families was quite drastic.

The deprivation caused by the land reforms would have been less severe on this class were they used to or inclined toward taking up gainful employment and supplementing their land income with earned income. The feudal ethos of high spending, conspicuous consumption, and luxurious living further depleted their wealth. Some of the families belonging to this segment of Muslim population had substantial assets and these could have been utilized to offset the loss resulting from the abolition of the *jagirdari/zamindari*. But these assets consisted of jewellery and personal effects like clothes and furniture, or lands

and houses either on their *jagirs* in rural areas or in the depressed neighbourhoods of the towns. The jewellery and furniture were sold or pawned off. The fixed assets—lands and houses—were mostly in *jagirdari/zamindari* areas where they did not have much value. Many of the *jagirdars* homes were located in older portions of the cities where real estate values had depreciated. In many instances the *jagirdars/zamindars* lost their landed properties as a result of long drawn-out and expensive litigation, bureaucratic hostility, illegal occupation by gangsters, and the like. The legislation abolishing the *jagirdari/zamindari* systems provided for compensation to be paid to the landlords who had lost their land as a result of the land reforms. The compensation money paid to them was spread over a number of years and instalments and the amounts were so small that they were rapidly consumed with little thought of future and the families endured a great deal of hardship to which they were not familiar. In sum, therefore, the economic and social consequences of *jagirdari/zamindari* abolition on this segment of the Muslim community were quite devastating, and produced a dramatic decline in their socio-economic position.

In Uttar Pradesh, the consequences of *zamindari* abolition for small landlords were also negative. According to Zarina Bhatti, a sociologist, "lacking power, their maneuverability was limited and consequently they lost a good part of their lands to the tenants who acquired legal rights over the lands they were cultivating. Also lacking means, they were not able to buy *Bhumidari* rights. The economic condition of these small landlords has, therefore, deteriorated."<sup>7</sup>

The big landlords had in a few cases acquire some administrative experience in their *jagirs*. The small landlords lacked even that experience and had to face a sudden decline in the opportunities for them. Gradually, this segment of the Muslim landed aristocracy has either been edged out of the rural social structure or has been forced to join the ranks of the peasantry, but neither of these two changes has brought about an improvement in its general economic situation. For the older



members of this segment of the landed aristocracy, according to Khusró

an alternative employment has been out of the question but even the younger ones were hardly trained for any vocation, and though some of them did have the opportunity of education at the school level..., very few of them had pursued college education and obtained a university degree. The jagirs once abolished, the chances of employment for these small jagirdars and their generally untrained sons were in fact slender and this was more so in the context of retrenchment in government departments, recession in industry immediately after 1951 and falling agricultural prices which made even agriculture much less profitable than the inflationary era of 1940-1951.<sup>8</sup>

The third segment of the Muslim landed aristocracy comprised of those families who also participated in the urban sector of the society and a numbers of whose members went in for higher education and sought employment in the cities, but who were essentially rooted in the rural social structure. Already active in the country's politics either in their respective states or at the national level, they were in a position to make a fair assessment of the direction in which the wind was blowing. Sensing that land, the very basis of their power and status might be lost, they were able to ensure that change did not affect them adversely when it came. They, therefore, survived the change that was initiated by the land reforms. They remained nearer the seats of power and obtained employment and a new status.

The stability and survival of this segment was achieved through two strategies. On the one hand, the members of this segment ensured that the land which was leased out was protected from legal transfer to the cultivating tenants. Zarina Bhattý describes the mechanisms employed towards this end by the Kidwais of east-central Uttar Pradesh:

...Anticipating the zamindari abolition bill, the dominant Kidwai lineage was able to retain (as many others did), a substantial area of land under their control by a series of manipulations. The land was re-distributed within the joint family and each owner was shown as a cultivator. In practice,

they continued to let out land on an arrangement which described the tenant as a hired labourer. The latter accepted this system on account of his inherent weakness and his inability or unwillingness to take advantage of the law. If a tenant was expected to cause difficulties, he was not allowed to cultivate the same plot of land for more than two years. This led to a well-managed reshuffling of tenants every two years. Simultaneously, the dominant lineage began to cultivate relatively large farms directly with the help of hired labour drawn from the landless labour classes.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the agriculture, the stability of their social and economic status was secured by the members of this section of the Muslim landed aristocracy through a diversification of their economy. As already stated, the younger members of this section went in for education and, therefore, obtained employment. The trend toward employment was strengthened. Those who did not take to urban employment entered the field of trade and commerce. They opened restaurants, transportation networks, rice and flour mills and saw mills. Since a number of people from this lineage had previously been active in the nationalist politics, it was easy for them to secure licences for their commercial and business activities. Bhatta's account of the Kidwais once again highlights this aspect

... They aligned themselves with the dominant political party and using earlier and new associations, secured a nomination for state Assembly seat. It was easy to win an election from the home constituency with the inherited prestige... Positions were then secured in organizations, such as the Cooperative Bank and the UP Sugarcane Association, which were directly relevant to the economic life of the region. Thus the link shattered by the *zamindari* abolition was reforged and the political prestige and power of the dominant lineage of the Kidwais successfully retained.<sup>10</sup>

Having protected themselves, the dominant lineage wisely nurtured its power. It actively participated in bringing greater prosperity to the village. It effectively provided the needed political link with the government from which the village benefited.<sup>11</sup>

On the whole, therefore, the impact of *zamindari* abolition on this class of Muslims was minimal, and it was able to adjust to the changed circumstances with relative ease. In a few cases it even succeeded in improving its situation as result of boom in commerce, trade, and economic development generally and its entry into organized politics.

Distribution of land ownership describes intensity of resource base of a rural population dependent upon agriculture. Table IV noted below presents land ownership data for the rural India on a national scale. Excepting the "Other Religions" category (which is relatively smaller proportion of the total population), relative landlessness is more among Muslims. Thirty five percent of Muslims as opposed to only 28 per cent of Hindus are landless. Hindus also have a relative advantage in owning land in large size class. For example, while one fifth of Hindus own five acres or more land, only one tenth Muslims belong to this category.<sup>12</sup>

**Table IV**  
**Distribution of Persons by Size of Cultivated Land & Religion**  
(in percentage)

<i>Area in acres</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>Others</i>
0.0	28.0	34.7	30.4	40.7
< 1	17.3	24.4	27.5	12.1
1 - 2.5	18.3	17.5	18.9	8.5
2.5 - 5	16.3	12.9	14.3	12.0
5+	20.1	10.5	8.9	26.7
All	100	100	100	100

Source: NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88. Table 23.7 (Page S-53).

### Occupation and Work Participation

In urban areas, whereas 47 per cent of Hindus are employed in regular wage/salaried occupations in organized sector, only 29 per cent of Muslims are so employed, as indicated in Table V.

**Table V**  
**Distribution of Persons by Household Type (Occupation) and**  
**Religion, Urban India 1987-88**

(in percentage)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>Others</i>
Self-employed	35.9	53.4	21.4	44.6
Regular wage/salaried	46.7	28.9	56.1	38.3
Casual Labour	12.1	13.4	12.3	10.5
Others	5.4	4.3	10.2	6.6

Source: NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88. Table 27U (Page S-57).

A majority of Muslims are self-employed, for example, 53 per cent of them as opposed to 36 per cent of Hindus are self-employed in urban areas. However, 12-13 per cent of all the religious categories work as casual labourers in urban areas. Information on type of employment and gender-specific work participation rates are difficult to find. This rare glimpse in three broad categories of employment namely, self-employed, regular workers, and casual workers was made in the NSSO survey. All the modern public and private sector jobs are included in this category. 'Casual' workers are defined as those who work for wages on a day to day basis.

**Table VI**  
**Pattern of Employment by Religion, 1987-88**

(in percentage)

<i>Residence/Sex and Religion</i>	<i>Self Employed</i>	<i>Regular Worker</i>	<i>Casual Worker</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Work Partici- pation Rate</i>
<b>Urban Males</b>					
Hindus	39.1	46.4	14.5	100.0	52.0
Muslims	53.3	29.9	16.7	100.0	49.1
Christians	29.7	53.4	17.0	100.0	48.9

<i>Residence/Sex and Religion</i>	<i>Self Employed</i>	<i>Regular Worker</i>	<i>Casual Worker</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Work Partici- pation Rate</i>
<b>Urban Females</b>					
Hindus	45.0	27.7	26.4	100.0	15.9
Muslims	60.0	15.7	24.3	100.0	11.4
Christians	34.3	51.5	14.2	100.0	23.6
<b>Rural Males</b>					
Hindus	58.5	10.1	31.4	100.0	54.2
Muslims	59.0	7.5	33.5	100.0	50.5
Christians	52.1	12.0	35.9	100.0	
<b>Rural Females</b>					
Hindus	59.9	3.6	36.5	100.0	33.7
Muslims	67.9	3.0	29.1	100.0	19.6
Christians	57.6	9.9	32.4	100.0	37.3

Source: NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88. (Schedule - 10).

The above table presents structure of employment and "work participation rates" (WPR) for various religious groups, by sex and residence (rural or urban). Note that the WPRs for males in both rural and urban areas for all religious categories are fairly high. The male-WPR is marginally higher for all religious groups in rural areas. The differentials between religious groups for males is also marginal. The female WPRs are substantially lower in both rural and urban areas. For example, the WPR among urban Muslim females is as low as 11 per cent while this rate is 16 per cent for Hindus and 24 per cent for Christians. Similarly, the rural WPR for females is only 20 per cent for Muslims, while it is 34 per cent and 37 per cent for Hindus and Christians respectively. Apart from the lack of work opportunities for females, the cultural factors such as the practice of female seclusion might have affected the female WPRs nationally.

When we take a look at the distribution of employed persons by category of work, it is interesting to note that over 53 and 60

per cent of male and female Muslims respectively, in urban areas and 59 to 68 per cent of males and females respectively, in rural areas are "self-employed". This percentage is substantially lower for both Hindu and Christian males and females in urban areas. On the contrary the Hindus' and Christians' share in 'regular workers' category is substantially higher for both males and females in urban areas. The employment of Muslims in regular wage/salaried jobs is marginal. This presents a very dismal picture especially for Muslim females since their WPRs are very low to start with and only a few of them are in regularly paid jobs. One possible reason for this may be the lack of education among Muslim women. In the 'casual workers' category, the Muslims' share of employment is comparable to other religious categories.<sup>13</sup>

### Industrial Sector

Apart from the mercantile groups of Indian Muslims such as the Aga Khani Khojas, several sects of the Bôhras, Memons of the west coast of India, and the Labbais of the south-eastern coast, the generality of Muslims in Hindustan and the Deccan kept away from trade and commerce, at least up until the independence. There is little historical evidence to support the theory of lack of Muslim interest in trade and commerce or religious reasons to explain the paucity of Muslims in India's industrial sectors either as owners or managers. The Prophet Muhammad himself was a businessman, and many early Muslim settlers on the western coast of India were merchants. One would imagine that the example of the Prophet, if not of the early Muslims, would be emulated in India. This has not happened. Why? Sometimes the dearth of Muslim businessmen is explained partly to the prohibition of interest, and partly due to fragmentation of Muslim family wealth as a result of Islamic laws of inheritance that prevent capital formation. Some have sought to attribute it in terms of feudal ethos that pervaded the Muslim society in India until recently. The dominant Muslim classes of *ahl-i sayf* and *ahl-i qalam*, (men of sword, that is, soldiers and policemen; and men of pen, that is, clerks,

administrators, teachers, and judges), in Hindustan and the Deccan could hardly be expected to go into the business world. Thus it has been said that where two or three Pathan tribesmen are gathered together, you have a blood feud; two or three Muslims, a feast; two or three *banias*, a bazaar; and two or three Gujaratis, a stock exchange! Similarly, some Muslims were considered temperamentally and psychologically unsuitable to handle money. Around the time of partition of the subcontinent, some confirmation of this exaggerated statement became available. According to the Lahore correspondent of *The Times*, (London) "the immediate effect of Hindu exodus is that the economic life of the city is almost at a standstill. Several banks are closed, as nearly all the clerks were Hindus. Many shops are shut."<sup>14</sup>

Despite the passage of time, just a handful of communities, the Marwaris, Parsis, and the Gujaratis continue to dominate the big businesses. Only a few other groups, the Punjabis, (for example, the Shrirams, and the Oberois), Sindhis, (for example, the Hinduja), the Maharashtrians, (for example, Kirloskers), the Goans, (for example, the Chowgules), the Chettiars, (the Murugappas and the Muthiahs), and the Mangaloreans, (the Mallyas) have succeeded in joining the ranks of top 100 companies in the private sector drawn up by *The Economic Times* Research Bureau in 1988.<sup>15</sup> In this list no company owned by a Muslim is found, as none reported sales anywhere near the Fortune 100.

"A State-wise Picture of large-Scale Industrial Activity" compiled by the Economic Intelligence Service of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, Bombay, in July 1981, provides data for 2832 industrial establishments owned by 1109 large corporate units each with a sales of Rs. 50 million and above. These industrial establishments are engaged in mining and manufacturing activities. In this listing of 2832 industrial establishments, only four units are owned by Muslims. Out of the four units controlled by Muslims, three—Ahmad Omarbhoy, Chemical, Industrial, and Pharmaceutical Laboratories, (CIPLA),

Dynacraft Machine Company—are located in Bombay, Maharashtra, and Geep Industrial Syndicate based in Allahabad, UP. Other major Muslim companies founded after 1947 are: the Rizvi Builders, Dawood Shoe Company, Akbarallys, Inqilab Publications—all in Bombay. The Hyderabad Cigarette Factory once a giant is now a small company, though established before 1947.<sup>16</sup> Compared to the dismal picture in the big businesses, Muslims fare somewhat better in the ownership and workforce of the small scale industries. Examples of new entrepreneurship are coming, of which Shahnaz Husain's beauty saloon franchise is a prime example.<sup>17</sup> Along similar lines, the usually well-informed fortnightly *India Today* reported young Muslims forging ahead in small business and independent professions such as architects, builders, contractors, managers, skilled mechanics, and the like.<sup>18</sup>

### Small Scale Industries

Any discussion of small scale industries is beset by problems of definition of what constitutes this sector. It can be defined in terms of the workforce involved, the capital invested, or net sales. For the purposes of the discussion, the small scale industries are defined as those low-capital low—technology industries in which Muslims are traditionally involved in large numbers either as owners-manufacturers or as workers and craftsmen. Thus in Uttar Pradesh, Muslims specialize in the brassware (Moradabad), pottery, (Khurja), carpets, (Bhadohi and Mirzapur), woodwork, (Saharanpur), handprinted textiles (Farrukhabad), zari and silk embroidery (Varanasi), kargha and handloom cloth (Mau). In Bihar, Muslims are found in large numbers as silk and handloom weavers. Bhiwandi, Maharashtra's powerlooms are owned predominantly by the Muslims. In Andhra Pradesh, Muslims specialize in Bidri works and woollen carpet industry and, in Karnataka, Muslims specialize in Bidriware, silk rearing, and toy industry. In Jaipur, Rajasthan, many Muslims are involved in lapidary work. Gujarat's textile crafts involving block and screen printing employs a large number of Chippas, a Muslim group. The



Lucknow *chikan* craft employs thousands of women in *pardah* and their children who do piece-work embroidery in their homes at starvation wages in an export trade controlled almost entirely by Hindus.<sup>19</sup>

The economic fortunes of the artisans has fluctuated over time, many of the artisans' products were tied to the feudal economy. Their goods were essentially produced for the local market or for the luxurious tastes of the feudal aristocracy. The immediate consequences of the abolition of some 500 odd princely States, and the termination of the *jagirdari/zamindari* system upon the artisans and craftsmen producing luxury goods was drastic. The decaying feudal class upon which they had come to depend after the contraction in the demand for their goods under the impact of colonial economy of the British, increasingly found it beyond its capability to pay for the luxury items on account of its own economic weakness and change in its status. Therefore in the first few years after independence there seems to have been a progressive decline in their economic condition and the market for their products almost totally disappeared. However, a renewed interest in traditional handicrafts subsequently, and the expansion of the market for handicraft items, both at home and abroad, especially in the Middle East, has again improved the situation of artisans—both Muslim and non-Muslim. Those who had gone into agriculture and other occupations in the years immediately after the land reforms in the late 1940s or early 1950s, had by late 1960s reverted to traditional handicrafts as this sector had greater payoffs.

The most obvious example of artisan prosperity has come from Moradabad, where many brassware artisans have turned owner-manufacturers.<sup>20</sup> But many other towns have experienced similar boom, as exemplified by the cases of Firozabad, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Bidar and Channapatna, in Karnataka. The crafts they specialized in were kept alive only in the absence of alternatives by a few members of a family until the boom. Beginning in the late 1960s, entire families switched to the

traditional crafts. When the families normally associated with the crafts were found inadequate for available work, they have recruited and trained outsiders in the craft to fulfil the expanding demand of the market for their wares.

Despite the boom in the demand for handicrafts within the domestic market, among the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), and overseas, especially in the Middle East, the full economic benefits of the market expansion do not accrue directly to the artisans because of the absence of a regulated sales mechanism and the proliferation of the intermediaries who pocket a large share of the profits. So far only some of the artisans of Moradabad have been able to make the transition from workers to entrepreneurs. The creation of workers' cooperatives and well-regulated public policy can protect the artisans from exploitation. As would be expected, the main reason for artisans' dependence on the middlemen both for raw material and marketing, is the lack of capital. The absence even of elementary education among the artisans denies them the opportunity to understand the market mechanisms and effects their receptivity to new and advanced technologies. Hence they continue to operate under a low technology which besides being labour-intensive, gives them low return on investment.

In sum, the following factors are responsible for preventing Muslim artisan from fully benefiting from his labour:

- (i) Muslim artisan has no share in the final price and value of crafts as the financing, marketing, and distribution at home and abroad is controlled by the middlemen.
- (ii) The dependence of the artisan is total on the financier as evidenced by the inability to buy raw materials for the crafts.
- (iii) Some artisans' dependence is so great that they depend on the middlemen for daily meals. If a strike or bandh takes place, the artisans go into debt due to work stoppage.
- (iv) A large number of artisans are in debt. Thus many work to pay for debt and are rarely able to break out of the cycle of debt.

- (v) Poor education is responsible for not knowing and therefore not taking advantage of state-sponsored financial schemes, loan opportunities, or the ability to borrow designs from Design Centers. No innovation is possible without access to education.
- (vi) Health care access is extremely low. Thus many artisans are able to work only a few hours.<sup>21</sup>

Muslim artisans can survive and prosper by organizing cooperatives. In the State of Maharashtra, nearly one hundred sugar factories are owned and operated by peasants. Large in scale and efficient in operation, these factories are organized as cooperatives, with half-a-million cane growers as their voting members. In many cases, the co-operative have out-competed factories owned by industrial capitalists. The co-operative have supported not only a rapid expansion in production and employment, but also a major increase in facilities for irrigation, education, and health care. There is much to be learnt from this success story by Muslims in various fields.

Apart from the artisans, Muslims are involved in other industries such as *bidi-making*. It is estimated by Maqbool Ahmad Siraj an informed journalist, that out of estimated 900, 000 *bidi* workers, 80 per cent are Muslims.<sup>22</sup> Yet no Muslim was found to be one of the top *bidi makers* in 1989.<sup>23</sup> Many Muslims are involved in the leather trade. This is not surprising. Leather work is considered an "unclean" occupation for the upper caste Hindus.<sup>24</sup> The Muslim butchers have thus a symbiotic relationship with the former untouchables, as the Chamars collected and skinned the dead animals. So Muslims are prominent in tanneries involving hides and skins. The shoe and rubber products seem to have evolved from the skills and techniques required in the leatherwork. Then, too, similar products—sandals, for example, as well as industrial supplies such as flexible couplings—can be made from either of these materials. Muslims are found as owners and workers in, *agarbatti* (incense sticks) manufacturing in more than one state hardwares of Rampur, glass industry of Firozabad, in Agra district in UP, and as locksmiths in Aligarh.<sup>25</sup>

Muslim employment (as opposed to ownership) in private sector is poor. This is understandable. Private big businesses and companies are caste-based. Indeed some of the largest group of companies headed by the Birlas and the Dalmias actually support militant anti-Muslim Hindu fanatics as was seen during the agitation over Babari Masjid between 1986-1992.<sup>26</sup> In the absence of Muslim big businesses, it is futile to expect large scale Muslim presence in this sector. According to a survey of corporate executives conducted by Santosh Goyal, Muslims accounted for a mere 48 out of 3129 counted.<sup>27</sup> Goyal's findings are confirmed by the investigation of *Muslim India* over a long period of time.<sup>28</sup> The number of lower ranking Muslim officers and workers in the private sector is not known, but there is widespread agreement among the scholars that the Muslims are few and far between there.

### Muslims in the Tertiary Sector

#### *State and Central Government Employment*

State employment has always attracted Muslims as the *ahl-i qalam* (men of pen or clerks and executives, teachers, and lawyers) and *ahl-i sayf*, soldiers and policemen, both of which along with a handful of professions, such as medicine and engineering, were considered *ba izzat peshe*, honorable occupations for the middle classes. During the medieval period and the colonial era, a large percentage of Muslims were engaged in state employment. However, this segment did not constitute an urban middle class as its pre-eminent position in the employment owed itself largely to its connections in the feudal hierarchy, particularly in Awadh and Rampur, in UP, and in Hyderabad, Bhopal and Tonk. A large Muslim middle class grew during the British *raj* in territories directly ruled by the colonial administration. The public employment came to constitute the basis of the middle class subsistence.

At the time of partition, option was given to the civil servants to choose between the two new countries. According to Maulana Azad, the Muslim League:

incited all Muslim officials to opt for Pakistan and leave India. At that time, a large number of key positions in the Central Secretariat were held by Muslims. The Muslim League pressed all of them to leave India. Those who did not readily agree were frightened by all kinds of reports as to what their fate would be once Congress came into undisputed power. As such rumours were causing a certain amount of nervousness among Muslim employees, I pressed the government of India to issue a circular clarifying its stand. Lord Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru supported me fully and a circular was actually issued reassuring service men from Muslim and other minority communities that, if they remained to serve in India, not only would they be given their rights but they would be treated generously. The result of this circular was that a number of Muslim officers in the Central Secretariat regained their confidence and decided to stay on in India. When the League leaders came to know this, they started to canvass the officers who wished to remain... The action of the League in driving almost all the Muslim officers out of India was not only foolish but harmful. In fact it was more harmful to the Muslims than to India as a whole. Now that partition had been accepted and Pakistan was being established, it was clear that the Muslims would get every advantage in the new State. If, in addition, some Muslims could have served in India, this would have been a great gain for the community as a whole. The presence of Muslims in some responsible positions would have given assurance to the community and allayed many unreasonable fears.<sup>29</sup>

The size of the educated middle class among the Muslim greatly declined as a result of the migration to Pakistan. There is no data to enable us to estimate the extent of migration of the employed middle class to Pakistan. An educated guess would be that the scale of migration was indeed large scale. The provinces that constituted the new state were, except Panjab, educationally the most backward in British undivided India, and thus the employment potential for the educated classes at least up until the 1960s, was quite wide. Many of the young graduates of Aligarh Muslim University and Osmania University sought and gained employment in Pakistan up until the 1971 war. As late as

1971, the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi was authorized to issue what was called "emergency entry permits" to technically qualified men and women to migrate. Since the tremendous rise in oil prices in the petroleum rich states of the Middle East and North Africa, many Muslims, like other Indians have migrated to those countries in search of jobs, further depleting the ranks of the educated middle classes in India. However, most of the migrants to the oil-rich countries are temporary residents, as only a tiny number is allowed to become citizens, if ever.

The number of Muslims in State and Central Services has been declining since independence. For instance, on January 1, 1947, undivided India had 980 ICS (Indian Civil Service, the highest paid civil servants) officers, of these 468 were Europeans, 352 were Hindus other than "depressed classes", and 101 (or 10.3 per cent) were Muslims. After partition all but four—Mian Azim Husain, M.A. Quraishi, Badruddin Tayyibji, and M.A. Rahman—migrated to or "opted out", as it was then called, for Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> As of January 1984, only 2.14 of the entire IAS cadre was Muslim.<sup>31</sup> The League's policy of removing Muslims from the Central Secretariat was indeed drastic, as Nehru noted in a letter to the Chief Ministers on 20 September 1953:

In the services, generally speaking, the representation of the minority communities is lessening. In some cases it is very poor indeed... looking through Central Secretariat figures, as well as some others, I am distressed to find that the position is very disadvantageous to them, chiefly to the Muslims and sometimes others also. In our Defence Services, there are hardly any Muslims left. In the vast Central Secretariat of Delhi, there are very few Muslims.<sup>32</sup>

Nehru's observation about the absence of Muslims based on official figures confirms what is impressionistically believed by the Muslim leadership. Incidentally, his remarks also show that community-wise figures about the State employees are in fact available or can be made available. Since Nehru's time little improvement has been seen.

Lack of Muslim presence in various Ministries and their departments, semi government agencies, nationalized banks,

and the like has been documented by various agencies and individuals, some even appointed by the state to look into Muslim complaints of discrimination; for example, the National Minorities Commission and the Gopal Singh Panel both reached the conclusion that Muslim share in the state employment is far below their population percentage, as low as 4.41 per cent in Central government service, as is evident from the table noted below.

Many writers such as Tahir Beg, A.M. Khusro, Syed Shahabuddin, Santosh Goyal, N.C. Saxena, and many others have conclusively established the dearth of Muslims in the civil employment, (see bibliography). In a study of the social background of civil servants comprising IAS, ISS (Indian Statistical Service), IES (Indian Economic Service), and CSS (Central Secretariat Service), Suren Navlakha found that there is proportionate representation of such religious groups as the Sikhs and Christians; however, there is an underrepresentation of Muslims..."<sup>33</sup> It is evident that due to low standard of education among Muslims, they are unable to successfully compete in the civil service examinations, and therefore are unable to obtain the jobs. What is unclear is why Muslims are not even *one per cent* in the Central Secretariat in New Delhi in 1971 in Class IV jobs.<sup>34</sup> The jobs not requiring formal education are distributed by the caste and political network as patronage. Muslims having no lobby or network at the political or administrative level are thus left out.

### Muslims in the Armed Forces

Information about the ethnic and religious composition of the Indian army is one of the most well-guarded secrets. In the words of Clive Dewey, "the most basic information on the most elementary matters is completely unavailable. We know next to nothing—to cite an obvious example—about recruitment... There are no data; only vapid generalizations... Historians have a better idea of how the Bengal Infantry operated two hundred years ago."<sup>35</sup> As one Indian analyst noted, "despite its invaluable use as a guide to the attitudes and behaviour of the officer corps, the

Table VII  
Muslims in the Central Government Employment—Class-wise

State (Sample Districts)	Total No. of emplo- yees	Muslim %age	Class-I		Class-II		Class-III		Class-IV		Popul- ation propor- tion of Muslim in Sample Districts					
			Total	Mus- lim	%age	Total	Mus- lim	%age	Total	Mus- lim		%age				
Andhra Pradesh	258	27	10.47	8	—	10	2	20.00	187	19	10.16	53	6	11.32	26.45	
Assam	3135	255	8.13	2	—	470	22	4.68	2205	192	8.71	458	41	8.95	36.72	
Bihar	6617	359	5.43	28	—	995	27	2.71	3950	237	6.00	1644	95	5.78	—	
Gujarat	10361	494	4.77	371	0.27	477	5	1.05	6864	373	5.43	2649	115	4.34	8.48	
Chandigarh	1479	8	0.54	33	—	28	—	—	1200	6	2.50	218	2	0.92	1.45	
Haryana	897	6	0.67	27	—	28	—	—	750	4	0.53	147	2	1.36	33.62	
Kerala	8898	337	3.79	1143	22	1.92	739	22	2.98	5609	224	3.99	1407	69	4.90	24.89
Madhya Pradesh	2811	179	6.37	20	—	69	8	11.76	1942	119	9.12	781	52	6.66	5.34	
Maharashtra	4384	184	4.20	17	—	27	—	—	3230	121	3.74	1110	62	5.59	9.93	
Orissa	13040	205	1.57	30	—	513	16	3.12	10031	160	1.60	2466	29	1.18	1.07	
Rajasthan	6674	229	3.45	401	—	132	6	3.03	4821	199	4.14	1330	26	1.95	11.54	
Tamil Nadu	200	8	4.00	3	1	33.33	25	1	4.00	133	5	3.76	39	1	2.56	7.02
Uttar Pradesh	12307	929	7.55	134	11	8.21	335	15	4.48	7295	550	7.54	4543	353	7.77	17.29
West Bengal	4782	136	2.81	15	—	213	—	—	3740	85	2.25	814	51	6.26	26.22	
Grand Total	75951	3346	4.41	2232	36	1.61	4060	122	3.00	52000	2294	4.41	17669	904	5.12	5.93

Source : Gopal Singh Committee Report on Minorities, Vol. II, as cited in *Muslim India* (January 1986): 30.



particular corporate character of the Indian army, especially in terms of officer's specific ethnic or religious origins has always been unavailable due to government's security considerations.<sup>36</sup> A senior army officer noted in print that Indian army "is perhaps one of the most secretive armies among democratic nations."<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, given the democratic rights in India available to all individuals—including retired army officers—to freely write and publish in military magazines in which matters of army interest are debated form the basis of the foregoing discussion.

Before independence, Muslims constituted as much as 34 per cent<sup>38</sup> of the Indian army. They were one of the chief beneficiaries of the colonial policy of recruitment on the basis of the theory of martial races<sup>39</sup> This theory held that some races (actually ethnic groups) such as the Panjabi Sikhs and Hindus, Jats, Rajputs, Dogras, Marathas, Gurkhas, Garhwalis, and Kumaonis, along with the Pathans, Panjabi Musalmans, (known as PMs), Hindustani, Deccani, and Moplah Muslims made good soldiers. The martial races were thus tall, broad-shouldered, light-skinned, and capable of enduring hardship. Town-dwelling educated Indians such as the Bengalis and South Indians on the other hand were considered either short, dark-skinned unmanly cowards, or seditious agitators, material unfit for a military career. Apart from the physique, the martial races were regarded as politically docile and more subservient to the authority than others. The recruitment to the army along ascribed military qualities of certain groups was pursued most vigorously between 1857-1939. The result was the evolution of the Indian army along ethnic lines with Sikh, Jat, Dogra, Rajput, and Gurkha regiments to name only the most famous. Despite the large scale recruitment of at least five Muslim ethnic groups<sup>40</sup>, there was no pure Muslim regiment ever created. Perhaps the British distrusted Muslims most given their leading role in the 1857 uprising and, therefore, dispersed them into mixed regiments.

At independence in 1947, Muslims found themselves divided between two sides of the border of the new countries, hostile to each other from the beginning. The government in

New Delhi was faced with a sensitive question. Will the Muslim youths with kin across the border in the enemy country become a fifth column? In other words, a Trojan horse dilemma haunted the Central Government of India. By the terms of the partition, officers and jawans of the British army were given the choice of joining the armies of India or Pakistan. Naturally most Muslims opted for Pakistan. But as many as 215 Muslim commissioned officers and 339 VCOs, or Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, later designated as Junior Commissioned Officers, opted for India, according to the Ministry of Defence.<sup>41</sup> Soon after the partition of the country, the loyalty of the residual Muslim officers and men was put to test. In the first India-Pakistan war over Kashmir in October 1947, Brig. Muhammad Usman of the Madras Regiment died fighting for India for which he was posthumously awarded.<sup>42</sup>

Further test of Muslim loyalty came during India's military operation against the princely State of Hyderabad, Deccan. According to Sanjoy Hazarika, the New Delhi correspondent for *The New York Times*, an anonymous military expert commenting on the desertion of Sikh soldiers after the Indian army's raid on the Golden Temple in Amritsar claimed that "about 700 Moslems left the army after it invaded the Moslem State of Hyderabad in 1948 and forced its merger with India."<sup>43</sup> Since no contemporary confirmation of the reported desertion is available, the military expert's claim of Muslim desertion renders it highly suspicious if not malicious. The only serious instance of Muslim improbity was the sole case of Brig. Anis, who "after having opted for India and been advanced to positions of responsibility and access to secret information, in 1955 voluntarily retired and at once settled down in Pakistan, accepting a Pakistan government post. It can be imagined how severely behaviour such as this worsens the situation of those Muslims who remain. Brig. Anis's move... made it much more difficult for another Muslim to be appointed brigadier."<sup>44</sup> However since Anis's migration to Pakistan, no further cases have been reported. Still further Muslim test of loyalty came in the 1965 conflict with Pakistan. According to an Indian academic

specializing in military affairs, "When the war began in September 1965, a Muslim majority battalion of the Rajput Regiment stationed in the crucial Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir, far from being hastily withdrawn, was allowed to play its part in the execution of the army's forward actions. According to several high-ranking Indian Army officers, the fact that the battalion did not flinch and carried out its assigned role with considerable credit, sufficiently dispelled worry—at least within the military—about the loyalty of the Indian Muslim soldiers".<sup>45</sup> In the same conflict two Muslim soldiers, Havildar Abdul Hamid of the Mahar Regiment and Maj. M.A.R. Sheikh received high military honours for their gallantry, a pattern repeated by other Muslims in the 1971 war.<sup>46</sup> Despite clearly demonstrated loyalty in the battlefield, two researchers on the Indian military, Daljit and Katherine Singh, "were able to find not a single Muslim officer above the rank of major-general occupying a responsible position of military command,"<sup>47</sup> in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This may be due to persistent lack of trust in Muslims. For example, Gen. K.M. Cariappa, a former commander-in-chief of the Indian army demanded Muslims to prove their loyalty to the nation in an offensively titled diatribe in the *Jana Sangh* weekly *Organiser* in August 1964.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, according to George Fernandes, a prominent labour leader and Minister in the Janata Government of 1989, "the Muslim is not wanted in the armed forces because he is always suspect—whether we want to admit it or not, most Indians consider Muslims a fifth column for Pakistan."<sup>49</sup> The career of Maj. Gen. Enayat E. Habibullah, (d. 1990), while holding many distinguished appointments—including long years as the commandant of the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Doon, and the National Defence Academy at Khadakvasla—did not involve command of a regiment—illustrates the tendency in the 1950s through 1970s not to fully trust or give Muslim officers major command positions. With the loss of major Muslim recruiting areas of Panjab and the North West Frontier Province to Pakistan, Muslim percentage went down dramatically in the army. For instance, Mahavir Tyagi, the

Union Minister of State for Defence, told the Aligarh University Union in the 1950s that "the percentage of Muslims in the armed forces had come down to two <sup>50</sup> despite a population per centage of over 11 per cent. Painsstaking research on the topic by K.L. Gauba<sup>51</sup> shows no improvement in Muslim recruitment in the army during the 1960s and 1970s. Since Tyagi's statement, no figures are available about the Muslim percentage in the army, air force, and the navy despite Syed Shahabuddin's specific enquiry in Rajya Sabha, as "no community-wise record of officers is maintained in the Defence Services".<sup>52</sup> A casual glance at the Indian newspapers will show how the government statement is palpably false because the application forms published in daily newspapers for military entrance examination invariably ask candidates to identify religious affiliation. It is probably more accurate to say that information of this nature is usually classified. Therefore it is hard to say what the Muslim percentage in the various services is. However, newspaper reports of Pakistani P.O.W.s' surprise at finding Muslim soldiers in the army and the promotion of Air Marshal Idris Hasan Lateef as the Chief of the Air Staff (in 1978), and that of Air-Vice Marshal Jaafar Zaheer in early 1970s, as well as the elevation of four Muslim officers—Lt. Gen. Sami Khan, Lt. Gen. Afsar Karim, Lt. Gen. Jameel Mahmood (d. 1993), Lt. Gen. Muhammad Ahmad Zaki—in the 1980s and in the 1990s as the General Officers Commanding of various regional commands, tends to suggest that Muslims are no longer widely distrusted and discriminated against, as they were in the first few decades after the partition.

The structural impediment to the recruitment of Indian Muslims as jawans come from the manner in which they (the jawans) are recruited. The rank and file soldiers in the Indian infantry are not demographically representative of the country as a whole and in fact contain deliberately constructed clusters of sub-castes.<sup>53</sup> The Indian army is organized essentially by regiments and battalions. Those regiments and battalions may be composed of a single class (that is, sub-caste), fixed class, mixed class or all classes. Infantry regiments identified by sub-caste and

kept from British times, such as the Sikh, Jat, Rajput, and Dogra regiments, continued after independence to recruit men into their battalions on the basis of caste. These are single class units. New infantry battalions created after independence were also, in the majority, created as single class units. Fixed class units may have more than one sub-caste in them, but the soldiers from different sub-castes are kept segregated in smaller units within the battalion. Thus, a fixed class battalion may have soldiers from different castes, but they are segregated at the company level. Mixed class units are heterogeneous by sub-caste but all the soldiers will come from one region in India, reducing their effective heterogeneity. A few modern or mechanized units in the infantry, such as the Brigade of Guards, formed after independence, the paratroop brigades, combat support arms, the logistic services and the armor and artillery branches, take their recruits without regard to caste. This practice results in some striking anomalies. The Sikhs compose two percent of India's population, but have their own battalions which compose 11 per cent of the army, while there are no Bengali battalions or regiments, though there are some Bengali companies. It is indeed ironic that the Gurkhas, "who are not even citizens of India constitute nearly five per cent of the strength of the army," according to Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha.<sup>54</sup> Because Muslims are neither part of the Hindu caste system nor are they concentrated in one geographic region, they do not fit into the army recruitment practice and method, except in the more modern units noted earlier. The recruitment of the officers in the army follows a different pattern. This is more based on education and exams and figures on the social background (wealthy sons of military officers and origin by state but not by ethnic or religious origin) are available.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy recruits on the basis of educational qualifications, exams, and tests. The lack of Muslims in army officer ranks, the IAF and the the naval forces is probably a function of low Muslim educational standard than a policy of deliberate exclusion through a discriminatory policy.

As a highly professional institution, the army has generally remained insulated (through separate schools, residence in cantonments away from surrounding towns, a distinctive sub-culture, and regimental loyalties) from the societal conflicts in the country until the Panjab problem arose in the early 1980s. Moreover, the comparison of Muslim percentage in the armed forces as a whole before and after partition, and in particular within the territorial army can be misleading. The largest single component of the Muslims in the Indian army in the pre-independence era came from Panjab. Since almost all Muslims were expelled from that State in 1947, Muslims cannot be recruited from the traditional catchment area. Little augmentation of Muslim numbers came from other areas. When the Hyderabad State Forces were disbanded in April 1951, its Second Battalion Hyderabad Infantry was merged with the Kumaon Rifles, but only four officers out of 64 were absorbed in the Indian army.<sup>56</sup>

Three developments in the country offer some hope and create fear that the army may open or close to Muslims seeking military careers. One is the changing recruitment policy of the Indian government. Enlistment was legally opened to all citizens in 1947. In 1949 further orders were given to abolish recruitment on an ethnic, linguistic, caste, or religious basis. In the case of the army's infantry regiments raised before World War II, however (their cohesion and effectiveness were construed to be rooted in a long-term sentimental attachments to certain traditions), that order was officially interpreted as setting an ideal goal rather than mandating immediate change. In the 1990s certain regiments continued to have a homogeneous composition; others mixed groups within a regiment but segregated them at the battalion or company level. Still others were completely mixed throughout. The government made a special effort to recruit among underrepresented sections of the population and during the late 1970s and early 1980s reformed the recruiting process to eliminate some of the subjectivity in the candidate selection procedure. Since 1980 the government has sought to apportion recruitment from each state (for example, Andhra

Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu, among others) and Union Territory according to its share of the total population. Despite the government's policy of encouraging recruits from all States and regions, some groups such as the Sikhs continue to have a disproportionate number (regardless of exact figures) in the armed forces. But the government's policy to make the armed forces more representative of the Indian society—as reported by *India Today*,<sup>57</sup> a news magazine with access to the government—is bound to help Indian Muslims, if applied uniformly and impartially.

A second development that raises hope for the Muslims has to do with development outside the army. In the favourable business environment initiated by economic liberalization and privatization since the early 1990s, modest pay scales and the invitation to a career of service makes the military increasingly difficult to attract talent with more lucrative and less rigorous career lines. In consequence, the class character of the Indian army has begun to change. As middle class students have stayed away from military careers and headed for private business, they have left the officer corps to the sons of the non-commissioned or junior commissioned officers. The lack of attraction of the army for some may mean opportunity to others. However, Muslim backwardness in education means less Muslim recruitment through competitive examinations conducted by the various military schools as seen by the poor showing of Muslims in the Defence Services Examinations results of 1983, 1986, 1991, and 1992. In each of the cases Muslim, percentage was a little more than one percent.<sup>58</sup> The effort of the government to provide coaching classes to the members of low-income minorities for staff selection examination initiated in 1991 by the Ministry of Welfare further increase chances for Muslims willing to take advantage of the offer.<sup>59</sup>

#### **Muslims in the Law Enforcement Agencies**

Like the armed forces, Muslims are not found proportionate to their numbers in law enforcement agencies such as the state police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) or armed

constabularies. Historically, it is widely believed among Muslim leadership that the Union Home Ministry headed by Sardar Patel issued secret circulars to the State Home Ministries not to recruit Muslims at all.<sup>60</sup> This is not surprising given Patel's strong anti-Muslim reputation. There is circumstantial evidence verifying the belief. During a meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru right after independence, Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, a veteran Muslim leader of UP, informed the Prime Minister that "in UP 8000 national guards were to be recruited with instructions not to take any Muslims. If that were done, the proportion of Muslims in the police rank and file would be considerably lowered, and when at some future time they might need Muslim policemen, who more than any other class could be relied upon to support the governmental authority against destructive and parochial forces, they would not be available. Panditji replied that Sardar Patel held the portfolio of the Interior but that he would inquire from him about the situation."<sup>61</sup>

Khaliquzzaman's statement is confirmed by a similar trend in the old Madras State right after independence. According to Mohamed Raza Khan, a Muslim League leader, "Madras government had to raise new armed battalions and they passed a G.O. [government order] that Muslims should not be recruited to the police force at all levels. Thus there was complete ban on recruitment either as police constables or sergeants or sub-inspectors. Eight Muslim young men selected as sub-inspectors and awaiting orders to join the Police Training School in Vellore were not called for training. It may be stated in this connection that Muslims in Madras State had a special aptitude for police work, particularly in the lower grades... Many Muslims were offering themselves to serve in the police force. Questions were asked by members on the floor of Madras Legislative Assembly, and the Home Minister, Dr. Subbaroyan, had to admit the existence of a G.O. which prohibited the recruitment of the Muslims."<sup>62</sup> More damaging evidence about the anti-Muslim discrimination came from Chaudhuri Charan Singh, UP Chief Minister and a future Prime Minister. When Dr. A.J. Faridi, the UP Muslim Majlis leader complained to him about the decline of



Muslims in the state police, Charan Singh bluntly told him: "Before independence the Muslim ratio in UP police was 20 per cent. Let it come down!"<sup>63</sup>

Given the discriminatory policies of the Congress-ruled government of Uttar Pradesh, it is not surprising that in 1964 Paul Brass found Muslims to be only 7.6 per cent of the Indian Police Service cadre in U.P.,<sup>64</sup> it remained practically the same for all ranks (7.14 per cent) nearly two decades later in 1981 according to *Muslim India*.<sup>65</sup> The latest figures available in 1993 show that in U.P.'s infamous Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), Muslims are only four per cent, in the CRPF only 5.5 per cent, and a mere six per cent in RAF, according to the usually knowledgeable *India Today*.<sup>66</sup> Scholars like N.C. Saxena and others who have gathered statistics for Muslims in the police on a national as well as State reveal less than three per cent whether as IPS officers or other rank.<sup>67</sup> In May 1993, it was reported that there are 1120 Muslim police personnel in Delhi out of a total of 50,934, in neighbouring state of Haryana a mere 271 out of 28,718 total.<sup>68</sup> It is significant that there are no Muslims at all in Union Home Ministry's two sensitive departments Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), according to the confession of the Central Minister of State for Home Affairs.<sup>69</sup>

The data gathered by the various commissions and the findings of various writers while empirically confirming the popular impression of Muslim absence from the state services has tried to explain the reasons for this phenomenon. The most frequently cited reason for the Muslim failure is the inability of its members to go for arduous scientific, technical, and professional education in large numbers. Many Muslims do not compete successfully with other individuals for a small number of positions in which the competition is acute, for instance, the various exams held by the Union or the State Public Service Commissions. The Muslims themselves attribute their poor numbers as a consequence of discrimination against them. It is often difficult to establish charges of discrimination in the absence of recorded cases or other empirical evidence. But

discrimination is a fact of life within the Hindu society, as each caste group seeks to promote its interests through ethnic nepotism. So it is possible, even probable, that there is some discrimination. But an important shortcoming of the discrimination hypothesis is that it is a static description of the situation. It does not explain the changing fortune of the aggrieved party. The other explanation of the lack of Muslims in the state services can be made through the cumulation causation model developed by Gunnar Myrdal to explain the plight of the Blacks in his seminal work *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*.<sup>70</sup> The cumulation causation approach is based on the notion that social forces do not cancel each other to reach an equilibrium. Instead, they reinforce each other. Thus each force maybe a cause as well as an effect of some other force. Furthermore, in the operation of cumulative causation, social forces, instead of achieving an equilibrium, keep on moving from it. In the field of employment, the operation of cumulative causation theory can be seen as follows. The employers argue that they cannot employ Muslims unless some qualified members of that group apply for the positions in the first place. The Muslim applicants' counter argument is that, "what is the use of applying when we know that we will not be hired." Both are right, but only partially, because low representation in the services, low percentage among competitors, low success rates, and perception of discrimination, all are correlated with each other; each reinforcing and causing the other. The circular causation has to be attacked somewhere to break the cycle.

### Muslim Working Classes

It is hard to generalize about Muslim working classes in any meaningful way. The sheer size and its geographical spread prevents analysis beyond a few broad remarks. Wherever the Muslim working classes were tied to the feudal economy, and performed their services within a local context, it is unlikely that their economic condition has changed. The hangers-on of the landed classes in the princely states of Hyderabad, Bhopal,

Rampur, Tonk, the soldiers in the princely states, and other unskilled manual labourers found that their services are no longer needed. Many have turned to rickshaw pulling and tonga driving and other low technology and labour intensive transport business. Their lot is probably most pitiable. Within the working classes are various groups of Muslims such as cotton fluffers, or weavers or workers in thread (variously called as Mumin, Julaha, Dhunye, Laddaf or Naddaf, Ansari, and Nurbafl), scavengers, (Mehtar), and butchers (Quraishis), and many others who have improved their lot as a result of state-sponsored social mobility achieved through reservation of seats in professional schools, scholarships, and other facilities normally extended to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes by the state. The State Government in Uttar Pradesh has, for instance, declared as many as 32 Muslim groups as Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The State of Andhra Pradesh did so in the case of Laddafs (weavers), Quraishis, (butchers), and Mehtars (scavengers). Bihar also has a similar number of Muslim Backward Classes, especially the weavers. In Gujarat, besides the Muslim backward classes, a few Muslim tribals are included in the list of Scheduled Tribes.<sup>71</sup> All of these groups have benefited from the state-sponsored social mobility. The Mandal Commission used the following criteria for declaring certain non-Hindu groups as OBCs (Other Backward Classes) (a) All untouchables converted into any non-Hindu religion, (b) Such occupational communities which are known by the name of their traditional occupations and whose counterparts have been included in the list of Hindu OBCs. Examples are Dhobis, Telis, Nai, Darzi, and the like. By this method, many Muslims groups will be the beneficiaries of the Mandal recommendations. Other Muslim working classes such as tailors, dairymen, greengrocers, and the like have experienced prosperity as a result of growing purchasing power in the urban areas.

#### **Potential Role of the Awqafs and Muslim Voluntary Sector**

Across the country are spread rich agricultural lands and lucrative real estate endowed worth millions of rupees as waqf

that can be used for the purposes of education and other forms of Muslim welfare, if the Waqf Boards, the governments involved, and the mutawallis are willing to rejuvenate what is presently a dying institution. No one knows for sure the precise numbers and value of the waqfs. Numerous inventories have been found incomplete. A thorough survey of the waqfs and their management and investment can make a real difference in Muslim welfare. Similarly, the Muslim voluntary sector consisting of *zakat*, *fitrat*, *sadaqat*, and *khayrat* gathered collectively and put under professional financial management can improve Muslim economy, as has been successfully achieved in many countries of Southeast Asia.

### Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that various segments of the Muslim community have experienced differential rates of economic growth or decline. Some peasants and rural workers have prospered due to their location in the Green Revolution, while those located in the paddy cultivation areas have stagnated or declined. The Muslim share in the big and medium size industries and businesses has been historically small, and has remained so due to the migration of the entrepreneur classes to Pakistan. However, the Muslims have done better in the small scale industry, traditional handicrafts produced by the artisans. Some like the Moradabadi brassware artisans have even become prosperous entrepreneurs. The rapid expansion of Pakistani industry at the hands of similar small Muslim businessmen who migrated from India to Karachi has been documented by an American scholar, Gustav Papanek. The transition from trade to industry was evidently no greater barrier for them. It is conceivable that the same could happen to the Muslims in India under favourable circumstances. The share of Muslims in the private sector employment remains meager due to the caste orientation of the business houses. The educated middle classes have shrunk due to migration to Pakistan and little expansion of this class has taken place due to its slow growth via transition from lower classes to the middle classes.

Education is the key to the entry of the lower classes into the middle class. Unless education is universalized and vocationalized, it is futile to expect middle class expansion. Excessive dependence on the state to the virtual exclusion of voluntary effort has been detrimental to the Muslims interests.<sup>72</sup>

The Muslim working classes are unlikely to take to education, unless compensation is made for child labor, which is a common feature in many Muslim groups. In this connection, financial support for Muslim education can come from the potentially rich but actually poor resources of the Muslim Waqfs.

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53. The discussion on recruitment policy draws heavily on Stephen P. Rosen's forthcoming *Culture and Strategy: The Case of India*.
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57. Kanwar Sandhu, "Army: Changing the Mix: Mixed Units to Repudiate Martial Race Theory", *India Today* (15 December 1992); p. 45.
58. See *Muslim India* issues of September 1984, October 1987, and October 1991.
59. See the advertisement in *Radiance* (15-21 December 1991); p. 3.
60. I have heard this accusation from so many Muslim leaders and journalists and secular Hindu historians that it appears to be part of their rational character.
61. Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, (Lahore: Longmans, 1961).
62. Mohamed Raza Khan, *What Price Freedom* (Madras, 1969); p. 386.
63. Dr. A.J. Faridi's interview published in *Shabistan Urdu Digest* (October 1970); p. 9. On opposition to an attempt to increase Muslims in the police see, "Chavan's Invitation to Disaster: Recruitment of Muslims in Police Forces", *Organiser* (18 October 1969); p. 3. N.S. Saxena, UP Police Chief in 1970-71, gives an incredible 35 per cent Muslim representation in UP police before partition. See his "Representation of Muslims in the Police Force, in his book, *Communal Riots in India* (New Delhi: Trishul Publications, 1990), chapter 18, pp. 128-31. On p. 143, he cites Ram Singh, the UP Home Minister in December

- 1978, who stated on the floor of State Legislative Assembly that "Muslims constituted 33 per cent of the two law and order forces of the state." Against the popular as well as the scholarly consensus on the anti-Muslim bias of the PAC, he completely exonerates it from its role in killing of the Muslims in Meerut, see the chapter 19 in the same book, pp.132-39.
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  68. "Muslims and Police", *Radiance* (25 April-1 May 1993); p. 2.
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  70. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, (New York: Harper, 1944).
  71. [List of] "Muslim Caste-Groups Declared Backward", *Muslim India* (October 1983); p. 466.
  72. Rafiq Khan's observations on the "Roots of Overdependence on the State", in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (23 November 1980); pp. 14-18, are pertinent in this respect.

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## Chapter 4

# The Problem of Muslim Educational Backwardness

Read in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher  
Who Created man out of a mere clot of blood  
Read! And thy Lord is the Most Beautiful  
He who taught the use of pen  
Taught man which he knew not

*Qur'an, (Surah 96)*

In the two final documents in the Government of India's *New Education Policy and Programme, 1986* in the section on minority education, the Home Ministry declared the Muslims alongwith the neo-Buddhists as educationally backward on a national level. Several surveys done by academics, journalists, and Muslim educational institutions empirically confirm the Home Ministry's findings and the views impressionistically held by many Muslim leaders and thinkers. Probably the most depressing but common conclusion of various studies is that Muslims are far behind other groups even when they happen to be the majority population in a given geographic area or in an educational institution established for and managed by Muslims themselves. Things have come to such a pass that "reservation" of seats is sought in their own professional colleges owing to low educational level of Muslim students. Concerned mostly with primary-through secondary school education, this chapter

establishes specific reasons which explain Muslim educational backwardness and the consequent absence of Muslims from institutions of higher education founded and run by members of their own community. Before turning to specific causes for Muslims' poor educational achievements in post-independence era, an examination of education in Islamic tradition and history is in order.

### Education in Islamic Tradition

On the level of formal teachings of Islam, it is important to remember that the Muslim scripture, Qur'an itself is derived from the word meaning reading. The very first verse of the revelation to the Prophet Muhammad is an exertion to read. Additionally, the Qur'an stresses the need for the acquisition of education in verses 29: 19, 88: 17. Even though the Prophet Muhammad was an *ummi*, unlettered, he time and again preached his followers "to seek *ilm*, knowledge, even if one had to travel to distant China." Muslims were urged to seek knowledge from any source and to consider it as one's lost property. For instance, the Prophet promised freedom to the non-Muslim prisoners of war in exchange for teaching Muslim citizens of Madina. An Arabic saying urges Muslims to seek knowledge from cradle to grave, "*utlibu al-ilm min al-mahd ila al-lahd*." So it is abundantly clear that the formal teachings of Islam far from discouraging pursuit of knowledge actually emphasize it. In practice, Muslims from about the beginning of Islam in the seventh century onwards received knowledge from different civilizations. Indeed a historian remarked that ignorance was considered so disgraceful that men who had not enjoyed opportunities of education in early life concealed the fact as far as possible, just as they would have hidden the commission of a crime. The Muslim contribution to science and technology on a global scale in the medieval period has been amply recorded. European scholarship now freely admits Islamic role in the renaissance. In medieval India during the Muslim rule between 1200-1700, there is ample indication to suggest that the sultans and the emperors encouraged education in keeping with the

tradition of Muslim learning in Central Asia, Iran, Arabia, and North Africa. The chief beneficiaries were the elite, although the masses attended the various mosque schools. The existence of royal libraries in many places testify to a general support for education. The vast number of manuscripts produced during the 500 years of Muslim rule in the subcontinent is an indicator that there was large enough demand to compose multiple copies of the same book. Some of the Mogul emperors like Aurangzeb were writers in their own right. The tradition of royal patronage of Islamic lore was carried on in many Muslim-ruled princely States of Hyderabad, Bhopal, Rampur, Murshidabad, Mysore, Arkat, and Tonk after the fall of the Moguls. So unlike in Hinduism, where only Brahmins and the upper castes were expected to have education, Islam's egalitarian approach in insisting that every person acquire knowledge has been a force in the spread of learning.

#### **Muslim Education in Colonial India: The Myth of Backwardness**

In British India (1857-1947) after initial hesitation Muslims took to modern Western education in large numbers. Revisionist scholarship on education in colonial India has demonstrated that Muslims did not lag behind other communities as sharply as was maintained by Sayyid Ahmad Khan and other protagonists of the Aligarh movement. In the light of quantitative and qualitative data gathered by scholars like Anil Seal, Aparna Basu, Paul Brass, David Lelyveld, and Hafeez Malik (see bibliography) it can be generalized that (a) the Muslim student population in modern high schools was generally proportionate to the Muslim numerical strength in the provinces of India, except Bengal. Particularly in the inexpensive missionary schools of some provinces the Muslims even exceeded others in actual numbers. This was particularly true of the North-west Province and Agra, the old name of UP. This situation reflects the pragmatic Muslim approach and not aloofness from modern education as is frequently charged. The myth of Muslim repudiation of modern education was created by Sayyid Ahmad

Khan and supported by William Wilson Hunter's famous book, *The Indian Musalmans*, published in 1871 whose findings about Muslim educational lag was true only for Bengal. One may ask why did Sayyid Ahmad Khan foster the myth of Muslim backwardness. Sayyid Ahmad Khan himself offers an explanation. In rejecting the notion of proportionate Muslim population in English schools, he had offered the norm of their past greatness, pointing toward the possibility of Muslim greatness in the future via modernity. He wanted to see not merely a "just" and proportionate representation of Muslims in modern schools, but their largest possible actual numbers. Thinking in terms of a Muslim renaissance in India, Sayyid Ahmad Khan could do no less, and the "myth" became the catalyst in mobilizing the Muslim national will for a competitive coexistence in the future. Moreover, it is important to remember that there were varying Muslim responses to modern western education, so that it is difficult to speak of a uniform reaction. Unfortunately, historians of modern India routinely ignore the positive contribution to the spread of modern education made by people like Badruddin Tayyibji (1844-1906) in the Bombay Province, Justice Sayyid Amir Ali (1849-1928) and Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur (1828-1893) in Bengal, and Nawab Salar Jang (1829-1883) in Hyderabad. Only in the 1990s there is a realization of the positive role of the elite in areas other than U.P. Thus it can now be said that in the provinces of Bombay, in the Nizams' Dominions, the Avadh, and the Panjab, Muslims' orientation was positive, while in Bengal, Sindh, and some portions of UP the hold of tradition was generally severe, and the initial reaction to modern education was negative. It is, therefore, accurate to say that Muslims had generally caught up with other groups in education in most provinces of the country by the 1940s.

#### **Muslim Education Since Independence**

The data available through The National Sample Survey Organization, a reliable source of information on socio-economic information on relative levels of education is revealing and

statistically confirms popular impressions about Muslim lag in education.

**Tables VIIa**  
**Distribution of Person by General Education, Sex and Religion**  
**Rural India, 1987-88**

(in percentage)

<i>Educational Level</i>	<i>Hindus</i>		<i>Muslims</i>		<i>Christians</i>		<i>Others</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
Not Literate	55.3	75.0	58.2	76.1	33.7	43.1	45.3	61.4
< Primary	19.0	11.8	18.6	13.1	20.5	17.8	17.9	15.7
Pri - Middle	22.7	11.2	19.1	9.9	35.4	29.2	25.5	19.4
Secondary	5.7	1.7	3.4	0.8	9.3	8.1	9.0	3.1
Graduate +	1.2	0.2	0.6	—	1.8	1.5	2.3	0.3

Source: NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88. Table 31.4 (Page S82,83).

**Tables VIIb**  
**Distribution of Person by General Education, Sex and Religion,**  
**Urban India, 1987-88**

(in percentage)

<i>Educational Level</i>	<i>Hindus</i>		<i>Muslims</i>		<i>Christians</i>		<i>Others</i>	
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem.</i>
Not Literate	25.3	42.2	42.4	59.5	18.8	22.7	18.0	31.2
< Primary	18.8	17.2	20.9	18.5	16.0	17.5	15.6	14.7
Pri - Middle	30.5	25.3	26.3	16.8	36.7	33.4	30.0	8.5
Secondary	17.2	10.7	8.0	4.3	20.1	20.8	23.6	17.5
Graduate +	7.9	4.2	2.3	0.8	8.1	5.5	11.7	7.9

Source: NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88. Table 31.4 (Page S85,86).

Levels of literacy and percentage of younger population in educational institutions are considered good indicators of social development. As seen in the tables above, it is revealing that in

rural areas, Christians are by far the most educated. Similarly, among all religious categories, males are by far the most educated. While illiteracy among Muslim men is 58 percent, it is 51 percent among Hindus, and only 34 percent among Christians. For females, respective percentages of illiteracy are 76, 75, and 43 percent respectively. Christians retain their lead in higher education categories, for example, 9 percent of Christian males and 8 percent of females have obtained secondary education, whereas the same figures for Hindus and Muslims are 5, 7 and 1.7 percent, and 3.4 and 0.8 percent. Further, while negligible proportion of Muslim females and only 0.6 percent of Muslim males are found in graduate and above category, these proportions are 0.2 and 1.2 percent for Hindus and 1.5 and 1.8 percent for Christians.

Compared to rural areas, in urban areas literates constitute a fair share proportion among all the religious categories. The male illiterates in urban areas are only 19 percent, 25 percent and 42 percent for Christians, Hindus and Muslims respectively, and female illiterates are 23, 42, and 59 percent respectively. Literacy rates at the level of secondary education in the same order are as follows: 20, 17, and 18 percent for males, and 21, 11, and 4 percent for females. Higher educated proportions are relatively better among Christian and Hindu males, 8 percent each, but only 2.3 percent of Muslim males are reported to be graduates and above. The achievement among Muslim females is 5.5 percent among Christians, 4.2 for Hindus and only 0.8 for Muslims. In light of the NSSO survey it is beyond doubt that Muslims are worse off than Hindus and Christians in education.<sup>1</sup>

The NSSO survey and the document produced by the Government of India in 1986 did not go into the causes of the Muslim educational backwardness. Generally, three explanations have been offered to account for the educational backwardness of Muslims in India. The first explanation asserts that Muslims are behind in modern education because of their rigid adherence to traditional religious values. According to this school of thought the absence of a clear line of demarcation



between secular and religious spheres of life results in the creation of a set of cultural ethos antithetical to the benefits of modern education. As a result of this ethos, Muslims tend to place greater emphasis on sending their children to *madarsahs/makhtabs*, the traditional religious schools, instead of sending them to institutions imparting modern education. The underlying cause for the preference of *madarsahs* over modern schools is said to be based on the fear that Muslim children would turn atheist or at least irreligious if they attend secular or missionary schools. One of the implications of this argument is that the Muslims are themselves to be blamed for their low level of education as it is the consequence of their inhibition against the acquisition of secular knowledge originating in western countries. A corollary of this argument is further developed in the assertion that Muslim religious establishment comprising of the *maulavis*, *ulama*, *mashayikhin*, and the like purposely keep the Muslim masses away from modern education lest they deprive them of their own privileged position in the society. Thus the root cause for the Muslim educational backwardness, according to this school of thought, can be located in the religious traditionalism of the Muslim community itself and the retrogressive outlook of its religious establishment.

The second set of explanation shifts the responsibility for Muslim educational backwardness to the state and the larger Indian society. Many scholars contend that reasons for Muslim educational deficiency should be seen as a consequence of a policy of deliberate neglect of the community by the state, exemplified by recurring discrimination against Muslim educational institutions in financial and legal matters or administrative obstruction. There are no empirical surveys, no systematic studies, or statistics recording instances to establish a pattern of discrimination against individual Muslims in education. This may be partly due to the subtleties of discrimination, so that it is difficult to prove it in a court of law. Examples of discrimination against minority institutions in issues of recognition are common, as are complaints of interference and withholding of funds. There is no society in the

world where powerless groups—whether in numerical minority or majority—face some form of discrimination. With this basic premise, we can assume that some form of discrimination at certain levels exists and will always exist despite the constitutional guarantees and minority educational rights conceded in Articles 15, 29, and 30 of the Indian constitution.

### Biased Textbooks and Cultural Environment

The third explanation concerns the problem of biased textbooks and the cultural environment of the schools perceived to be responsible for inculcating Hindu culture among Muslim pupils which tends to keep them away from schools. Most textbooks for Hindi and other regional languages, history, and social studies are inundated with Hindu mythology, biased versions of medieval Indian history, and misrepresentation of Islam and Muslim historical figures, leading to Muslim alienation, and in extreme cases to withdrawal from schools. As an example of such material, the Basic Hindi Reader for the fifth class, edited by the Director of Education, UP contains the following:

Indians regard the river Ganga as sacred. It is said that emerging from the feet of Lord Vishnu, the Ganga came to the thick hair of Lord Shiva and from there to the Himalayas. Lord Brahma, much pleased by king Bhagirathi's austerities, sent Ganga to the earth to bring salvation to living creature. The Ganga is believed to wash away all sins (literally to be the destroyer of sins).

The reading then went on to describe the beauty of Ganga and the worship which takes place on its banks at the famous pilgrimage centres. Quite apart from the mythological account of the origin of Ganga, the references to belief in its sacredness to 'Indians', not merely Hindus, is deeply disturbing to Muslims. Other stories found in the Hindi readers recounted the race of gods around the earth, the miracles of Krishna as a small boy, and various tales from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The quantity of mythological material is not large, being limited to one story in each of the readers examined. Some recognition is given to the Muslim culture, for instance to the two Ids, although the

emphasis was on the social and not religious aspect of the Islamic festivals.<sup>2</sup> The introduction of biased textbooks, going on since independence reached a peak in states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh ruled by the BJP from 1991 to 1992, which indicates little had changed whether the government in power was that of the Congress or that of the BJP. The difference is one of degree and not of substance. The revised textbooks in the BJP regimes presented a distorted picture of medieval Indian history and exclude any positive reference to non-Hindu religious figures like the Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Isa, Gautama Buddha, and even Mahatma Gandhi. A primary school mathematics textbook has a question: "If 15 *kar sevaks* (Hindu volunteers) demolish the Babari Masjid in 300 days, how many *kar sevaks* will it take to demolish the mosque in 15 days?"<sup>3</sup>

It is significant that many who did in fact demolish the Babari Masjid on December 6, 1992 came from Madhya Pradesh.

In another textbook the coming of Aryans is termed *Aryon ka aagman*, coming of the Aryans, while the coming of the Moguls is termed *Moglaon ka aakraman*, the invasion of the Moguls! The age-old Pythagorus theorem taught all over the world was replaced by *Bodyayan* theorem of the Vedic era.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, these textbooks were withdrawn by the UP administration in May 1993. Similarly in Delhi, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the Hindu scriptures are being taught to all students, regardless of religious affiliation.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, numerous cases have been documented of Hindu style of prayers and worship or other religious ceremonies, enactment of Vedic plays, dramas or songs during the school hours. However, the state schools are not the only ones preaching values of a particular religious tradition. The missionary schools of various Christian denominations called "saint" and "convent" schools are notorious for introducing their own religious values. These are matters which further estrange Muslim pupils from the schools, public or private.

### **Loss of Role Models**

Yet another explanation rests on the theory of the loss of role models. After the partition of the country in 1947 and the Indian Military Operations in 1948 against Hyderabad, a large number of the members of the Muslim middle class migrated to Pakistan. The remaining Muslims were rendered leaderless as a result of its migration to Pakistan. There are no detailed studies showing the extent and regional composition of migration to Pakistan, but it should be remembered that until 1971, the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi issued "emergency visas" to technically qualified Indian citizens wanting to settle down in Pakistan. However on the basis of the population composition of urban Sindh, where most Muhajirs have settled in Pakistan, it is fair to say that most migration took place from UP, Bihar, Central India, and West Bengal. It is in these areas that Muslims are educationally most sluggish, as the effects of the loss of role models, i.e. members of the middle class, to Pakistan is most acutely felt there. Indeed, some of the most educationally backward states in the country are Bihar and UP, where the Muslim percentage in total population is relatively higher.

### **Muslim Social Structure and the Appeal of Education**

While the reasons for Muslim backwardness in education: retrogressive outlook of the religious establishment and some segments of the Muslim society, discrimination and alienation, biased textbooks and the loss of role models cited above—all have contributed to the problem, the primary reason for lack of Muslim interest in education must be sought in the economic condition of the community. First of all, primary education in India is not compulsory, nor is child labour illegal. The result is that less than half of India's children between ages six and fourteen—82.2 million—are not in school. They stay at home to care for cattle, tend younger children, collect firewood, and work in the fields, or pick garbage. They find employment in cottage industries, tea stalls, restaurants, or as household workers in middle or upper class homes. Children are seen as an economic asset by the poor. The income they bring in and the work they

do may be small, but parents close to subsistence need their help. Most children who start school drop out. Of those who enter first grade, only four out of ten complete four years of school. Child labourers in India number from 13.6 million to 44 million, according to Myron Weiner, a leading authority on Indian politics and society.<sup>6</sup> An even larger number is cited by Swami Agnivesh, a social worker widely respected for pioneering a movement to free millions working in servitude. According to the Swami, an astonishing 50 to 115 million children work as labourers, and "one reason the society remained insensitive to the issue is that the child workers mostly come from the lower castes or the Muslim community. If these children were Brahmins, there would have been a hue and cry about them years ago."<sup>7</sup>

As described earlier, most Indian Muslims in India today consist of working classes, the landless agricultural labourers in rural areas, and artisans and craftsmen and other daily wage earners in urban areas. The appeal of education to this strata of society is very limited for several reasons. First of all education is an activity that requires a sizeable investment of time, energy, and resources. Even when education is provided by the state or local government schools without charge, the working classes are still unwilling to take it, as the expenditure of energy and time that the pursuit of education entails may still mean a loss of wages one could earn during the time spent in school. Long-term investment in education is of little attraction to people seeking immediate pay-off. The lack of interest in education is also true of the Muslim artisan class, as it feels that formal education leads to nothing more than a clerical career, whereas, according to Muslims artisans, if their children learn their craft, they are likely to earn significantly more than a clerical position promises. For the landless agricultural labourers the investment in education clearly means a loss in family income. Further reinforcing the disincentives in education is the absence of role models (fellow Muslims) in white collar jobs in the country's public or private sector. The miniscule Muslim middle classes, like the middle classes among other communities to whom

education is important as a prerequisite of entering professions or white collar jobs, continues to be interested in education. Since independence, there has been a tremendous expansion of the middle classes. India claims to have a 200 million strong middle class in the 1990s. But the Muslim middle classes have not expanded at the same rate of expansion as the national average.

The expansion of Muslim middle classes is possible only with the spread of education among Muslim working classes who have so far not been part of national literacy improvement. Growth from within is not sufficient to enlarge the ranks unless recruitment to the middle class can be promoted from the working class members of the community. Until that happens, Muslim middle class will remain miniscule and consequently the literacy rate will be low.

#### **Voluntary Effort in Education**

Apart from the normal State efforts to improve education, what special measures has the Muslim society taken so far to improve Muslim education? Most of the community efforts have been directed toward making demands upon the state without understanding the limits of the educational bureaucracy. Until 1981, the most important issue for the community elite in educational matters seems to have been the "minority character" of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). It is a measure of the Muslim elite's ignorance of the educational condition of the community that a enormous issue was made out of Aligarh where only a small fraction of Muslim students study, while little systematic attention was paid to the question of basic literacy of the vast majority of the community. AMU's own record in educational quality has been mediocre, comparable to any of the several universities in UP. None of its departments (with the exception of History) are notable for distinguished achievement. The educational condition of the Muslims in Aligarh district in which the University is located is most pitiable. Moreover, mass education of the Muslim community has not even been a declared goal of the University until the 1981 AMU Act.

A great deal of Muslims' effort in education has been directed without regards to the base of primary education in the community. Huge community investment has gone into the establishment of Muslim degree colleges, particularly in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. According to *Muslim India*, there are nearly 100 Muslim owned colleges in the country mostly in southern India.<sup>8</sup> The example set by the southern states is now being emulated in the North, exemplified by the AMU-sponsored medical school in Lucknow which opened in 1992. These are in addition to the two Muslim universities of Aligarh and Jamia Millia Islamia. Most of these institutions do not have Muslim students in majority in their professional schools, mainly because of a lack of "feeder system", as according to Gopal Singh Committee Report out of the total class X examinees, Muslims are only 4 percent, despite a population of over 11 percent. The poor educational quality of these small numbers of Muslim high school graduates means that they cannot qualify for admission to professional schools even in their own institutions. This is the case despite administrative manipulation of admission rules or criteria such as creation of quotas for internal candidates and the wards of institutional employees to ensure Muslim preponderance.

The Muslim managed institutions have turned out to be white elephants. It now appears, however, that the experiment of capital-intensive professional degree colleges has run its course, and it is time to draw right conclusions from this phase. The most important lesson to be drawn is that the base of Muslim education must be strengthened to provide a "feeder" system to the Muslim degree colleges. Otherwise the colleges established by the community will continue to suffer from the problem of not having Muslim students in majority even in Muslim managed institutions. The capitation fee charged at the professional schools means that only the children of the wealthy and the NRIs can afford and find admission. A second lesson to be drawn is that secondary education must be technical and vocational in order to create a class of people who will remain independent of the normal employment market. Finally,

Muslims must establish a network of community schools organized and run on the lines of state-established secular schools. These primary-secondary schools will provide a sympathetic milieu for the advancement of Muslim education. Muslim schools will become popular only when the quality of education is equal to or better than that offered elsewhere. The frustration with the government leads many Muslims to think in terms of a "parallel" system of education. It is indeed desirable, even necessary, to have schools run by the Muslim community. But given the enormity of the task, it is unlikely that the community can replace what can be done by the state. As for as the State is concerned, a ray of hope can be seen in a belated but wise step it took in 1986 to improve minority education. Its salient features of short term and long term nature are:

#### **Short Term Measure**

Programme of evaluation of textbooks from the standpoint of national integration.

#### **Long-Term Measures**

*Primary Education:* Institutionalized system for compilation of statistical information required by Commissioner of Linguistic Minorities regarding educational facilities. This would be done by the State Governments.

Eliminating delays in sanctioning of linguistic minority teachers' posts and appointment of teachers by delegation of powers to district collector. Action will be taken by the State Government.

Survey on availability of textbooks in minority languages and setting up of printing facilities in minority languages. Action will be taken by the State Government.

Survey on availability of training facilities for teachers in minority languages and measures to enhance such capacity wherever necessary. Action will be taken by the State Government.

Efforts will be made to utilize 15 percent of the curricular time for training in local crafts/trades and to arrange evening classes for children of artisan/agricultural labourers.



*Middle and Higher Secondary Education:* A scheme for remedial coaching in minority managed educational institutions. This will be done by the State governments.

Minority managed institutions will be given fair representation in the schemes for computer literacy in school education.

*Vocational and Technical Education:* Provision of vocational courses in higher secondary schools specially catering to educationally backward minorities.

Ensuring that in all the programs of technical and vocational education included in the policy, minority-run institutions derive full benefit.

Setting up Crafts Training Institutes in identified minority artisan concentration blocs with 80 percent seats for artisans' children.

*Women's' Education:* As literacy among women and girls' enrollment are the lowest among the educationally backward minorities, in the schemes for opening of girls' schools, appointment of lady teachers, opening of girls' hostels, and providing of incentives in the form of mid-day meals, uniforms, etc., the minorities' needs should be fully met.

A Production-cum-Training Centre for Crafts exclusively for girls, preferably with women instructors, should be established in each of the identified minority concentration districts. This will be done by the State Governments.

*Voluntary Effort in Adult Education and Early Childhood Education:* Orientation courses for professionals from minority communities to motivate voluntary effort; attaching one centre to all minority institutions to create awareness of these schemes and to train supervisors for multiplier effect. This will be done by the State Governments.

*Libraries, Reading Rooms, and Extension Work:* Schemes for encouraging the setting up of libraries, reading rooms, etc., in minority areas; pilot project for educational extension work in a few blocs on an experimental basis. This will be done by the State Government which will provide adequate finances for the purchase.

**Minority-Managed Educational Institutions:** Clear guidelines for recognition and timely disposal of applications. Each State Government to formulate its recognition policy and give wide publicity to it.

Effective monitoring arrangements should be made to see to the proper implementation of the programmes.

Scheme for setting up a State-wise federation of minority institutions to help in seeking cooperation of minority institutions in effective implementation of educational uplift measures, in ensuring minimum infrastructure facilities, maintaining academic standards and protecting the interests of the teachers; these bodies are to be officially recognized and assisted.

**Area Approach:** Special attention to the illustrative list of 40 minority concentration districts in locating schools so that minority children have access in matters of admission. The State Governments may include other districts on the basis of concentration of other educationally backward minorities.

**Scheme for Scholarships:** Scheme for scholarships for weaker sections on a merit-cum-means basis, with an in-built system of placement in good institutions; fee exemption/fee concession/compensation for opportunity cost for artisans and other weaker sections; such help could be routed through voluntary societies of all-India repute. To be implemented by the State Governments.

The policy programmes of the New Education Policy initiated in 1986 serves as the basis of a state-sponsored efforts for the upliftment of minority education. The implementation of the policy will be the test of the government's will to carry-out what has been stated on paper. The state-help must be vigorously supplemented by private/ voluntary effort in education. Only a concerted exertion on the part of the state and the community can bring about an improvement in Muslim education.

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## Chapter 5

# Urdu Language and Muslim Identity in India

"The preservation of Urdu is the preservation of Din."

*Hazrat Mawlana Ashraf  
Ali Thanawi*

Few topics among Indian Muslims invite such emotional outpouring as does Urdu. This is one of the few subjects over which there is near unanimity among "progressive", "moderate", "modernists" and "orthodox" Muslims. Among the progressive academics, Muhammad Mujib asserts that "stability and progress, national dignity and individual character all require that we should appreciate the true value of Indian Muslim culture and the Urdu language as the most precious heritage of our past and our greatest support in the future." A "moderate and a modernist" like Sayyid Abid Husain opined "the learning of Urdu for Indian Muslims is not only a vital cultural but also a religious necessity... It would be nothing less than intellectual and spiritual suicide to give up Urdu." Abid Husain's views do not seem greatly different from an "orthodox" Maulana Muhammad Ali Jawhar who "confessed in the end that Urdu is the irreducible minimum to which the most compromising Muslim would consent". The declining fortunes of Urdu were neatly summed up by a leading authority on

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Hazrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi, "Daraja-yi Urdu", *Burhan* (September 1941); pp. 188-192; quotation on p. 192.

Islam, Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "the community is in danger of being deprived of its language, than which only religious faith is a deeper possession." <sup>1</sup>

Language is a social institution. It has various functions to perform under different circumstances. According to a noted linguist:

Language is not merely a *means* of interpersonal communication and influence. It is not merely a *carrier* of content, whether latent or manifest. Language itself is content, a referent for loyalties and assimilations, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships, a maker of situations and topics as well as the societal goals and the large-scale value-laden arenas of interaction that typify every speech community.<sup>2</sup>

Urdu has all the characteristics specified above. Besides being a "means" and "carrier", Urdu has its own "content", which typifies the Muslim community of Hindustan living in the upper Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, and the Deccan, comprising of the modern States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. In addition to these territories, Urdu speaking diasporas are found in almost all other states of India (see map for covariance of Muslim population and Urdu-speakers). Since language is the vehicle of thought and religion is a major component of thought in most societies, it is not surprising that religion and language are often closely related. The place of Arabic in Islam, that of Sanskrit in Hinduism, Latin in Western Europe, and Old Church Slavonic in Eastern Europe are obvious examples. In the case of Muslim India, Urdu took the place of Arabic in religio-intellectual communication, though Arabic is retained in worship and higher religious education. Several reasons are responsible for the pre-eminence of Urdu in Indian Islamic culture:

- I. Urdu's grammatical structure is Indo-Aryan like that of most Indian languages. It shares the same inflectional system and a common core of basic vocabulary with Hindi. Beyond this commonality, Urdu parts company with other Indian languages as

- II. Phonologically, Urdu incorporates loan phonemes such *ayn*, *ghayn*, *fay*, *qaf*, *dhal*, *zal*, *ta*, *za*, *khaf*, *tha*, *zha*, *h*, *sad*, *z*, and *hamza* in its sound system. Sentences in Urdu follow the pattern in Arabic and Persian word order, called *kaf-i bayaniya*.
- III. An overwhelming majority of Urdu words comes from Hindi or Sanskrit or words made in conjugation with Urdu and other languages. But a majority of learned or abstract words in Urdu are predominantly of Arabic and Persian origin. Thousands of Arabic and Persian words, idioms and expressions, aphorisms, similes, and literary forms and traditions are based on the languages of Arabia and Persia. Indeed the higher the level of subject-matter, the higher the infusion of Arabic and Persian idiom into the speech. Maulavi Sayyid Ahmad Dihlawi has given a breakdown of the origin of Urdu words as follows in his monumental dictionary *Farhang-i Asafiya* 3

Table VIII  
Urdu Word Count

<i>Total Words in Farhang-i Asafiya</i>		54009
1.	Pure Hindi, Panjabi, & Purbi words	22203
2.	Urdu words, i.e. those formed in combination with words of other languages	17505
3.	Arabic words	7584
4.	Persian words	6041
5.	Turkish	105
6.	English	500
7.	Hebrew	18
8.	Other	553
<i>Total</i>		54009

- IV. The leadership in the development of Urdu has always been in the Muslim hands. There is hardly any non-Muslim writer of any stature in the first three hundred years (c. 1400-1700) of Urdu's development in the Deccan. The effort for the promotion of Urdu in university education came primarily from Muslims as exemplified by the cases of Osmania University in Hyderabad and Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. In the twentieth century, writers like Krishna Chandra, Rajendra Singh Bedi, and Kanhayyalal Kapur dominated the literary scene, but Urdu literacy is now almost non-existent among Hindus—except for a handful of police informers and epigraphists—due to language shift among non-Muslims in favour of Hindi or Panjabi.
- V. Orthographically, the Urdu script is an extended form of Arabic/Persian script. This script has been used for Urdu from the very beginning. The script of Urdu is its natural rampart. It is more so when aggressive promoters of Hindi seek to absorb it or deny its distinctiveness. For instance, a UP Chief Minister of Congress Government (between 1954-60), Dr. Sampurnand in an intemperate attack on Urdu wrote: "I do not consider Urdu a separate language but merely a style of Hindi in which words of Arabic and Persian derivation form a high percentage."<sup>4</sup>
- VI. Urdu language is exceptionally rich in literature on Islam and Muslims. Numerous translations and a wide variety of the exegeses of Quran, most of the Hadith, numerous work on Sirat, and countless books on Islam and Muslims are found in Urdu, a wealth of knowledge not shared by any Indian language. Indeed the richness of Urdu in Islamic studies is rivalled only by Arabic.

For all of the above reasons, Urdu is of paramount importance for the fullest development of Muslim life and culture in India. The Urdu script and vocabulary facilitates the



learning of Quran, Hadith, and other Islamic literature, more so when nothing comparable is available in Indian languages. Even when Islamic literature is translated or originally produced in other Indian languages, it will take centuries before the quality and quantity of this literature reaches anywhere near Urdu. The lack of crucial Arabic phonemes and Islamic terminology seriously impedes growth of Islamic literature in languages other than Urdu. While most Indian languages are region-based, Urdu alone is supra-regional. Urdu serves as the *lingua franca* for most Indian Muslims. A Muslim from Malerkotla, Panjab communicates effortlessly with a Muslim in Madras due to the common bond of Urdu, though it may not be the native language of either. Similar is the case with Kashmiris communicating with Muslims in Karnataka. Many members of the Ismaili elite seeking leadership roles in the larger Muslim community realized the necessity of learning Urdu.<sup>5</sup> In several instances, non-Urdu Muslims defended the case of Urdu as exemplified by the strong defence of this language on the floor of the Constituent Assembly by late Pocker Sahib, a Tamil speaking Muslim League member from Madras who insisted upon the inclusion of Urdu in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution at a time (1949) when many North Indians were too afraid to plead Urdu's case.<sup>6</sup>

Across the national borders of India, a knowledge of Urdu facilitates familiarity with religious and intellectual currents in the Arab world, Iran, Afghanistan, and Turan—the Persian-influenced Islamic Central Asia, and Pakistan. Particularly important in this connection is the role of script and learned words. For instance, in order to break the ties between Islamic Central Asia with the rest of the *ummah*, the former Soviet Union imposed Cyrillic letters upon various Turkic and Persian-influenced languages spoken by Muslims. Similarly a Westoxicated Kemalist Turkey changed Arabic-derived Turkish alphabet into Latin letters in the name of reforms. A large number of words of Arabic and Persian origin were removed, motivated by a desire to sever links with the Muslim world. As a result, the Turks and Central Asian Muslims have been deprived

of a priceless literary and cultural heritage communicated through an Arabic writing system and vocabulary. It is probably not a coincidence that two seemingly different sets of elites, the Western oriented politicians in Turkey, and the Soviet communist leadership in Central Asia both felt compelled to divest Muslim religio-cultural heritage which was perceived as a threat to their respective ideologies. In India, while the State has so far not made any direct attempt to change the script and the vocabulary, yet subtle pressure is applied on the Urdu speakers to encourage the introduction of Devanagari letters for Urdu, as exemplified by the UP Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav's suggestion<sup>7</sup>.

### **Rise and Fall of Urdu**

Regardless of the finer points about the precise linguistic and regional origin of Urdu, most scholars agree that various medieval forms of Urdu appeared in Hindustan and the Deccan in the twelfth century and culminated into a single literary style in late seventeenth century, with the Mogul conquest of the Deccan by Emperor Aurangzeb. With the fall of the Mogul Empire, Persian ceased to be the language of courts and administration. The decline of Persian though regretted, was not seen as much of a loss, for in the meanwhile Urdu had taken roots among Muslims, and had become capable of serving as the vehicle of Muslim religio-cultural expression. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, Urdu was enriched by a burst of original writings and translations from Arabic, Persian, and English. The British colonial authorities made English the language of courts, administration, and higher education, but made no conscious attempt to obstruct the progress of Urdu, except in the late nineteenth century when Hindi was encouraged at the expense of Urdu prompting Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Aligarh to prophesize that "the adoption of Hindi in preference to Urdu would result in the total separation of the Muslims from the Hindus."<sup>8</sup> In Hyderabad, great strides were made for the promotion of Urdu, particularly through the

elevation of Urdu as the language of state administration and the medium of higher education at Osmania University.

Since the Indian independence in 1947 and the violent annexation of Hyderabad into India in 1948, Urdu has been eased out of schools, colleges, courts, and administration. The Constituent Assembly of India declared Hindi to be the sole official language on 14 September 1949 by suppressing the claims not merely of Urdu speakers but also that of many other languages spoken in the so-called Hindi belt, which prompted Anand Narayan Mulla to bitterly criticize the unjust move in a moving couplet:

یہ حادثہ سال چہل و نو میں ہوا  
ہندی کی چھری تھی اور اردو کا گلا  
اردو کے رفیقوں میں جو مقتول ہوئے۔ سنا ہے ملا نامی  
شاعر بھی تھا۔

Yeh hadisa sal-i chahel wa nau main huwa  
Hindi ki chchuhri thi aur Urdu ka gala  
Urdu ke rafiqoon main jo maqtul huwe  
Suna hai ke Mulla nami shair bhi tha !

Translation: This tragedy took place in the year 1949  
It was Urdu's throat against Hindi's dagger  
Among those martyred for Urdu  
I hear there was a poet named Mulla

The Constituent Assembly's measure was followed by the introduction of Hindi as the sole official language in Bihar (Official Language Act 1950) and UP (Official Language Act 1951). Urdu speakers' claim were suppressed. The displacement of Urdu happened because the language became identified with Pakistan. Hindu right-wing politicians *within* the Congress Party such as Sardar Patel, Gobind Ballabh Pant, Puroshottamdas Tandon, Sampurnand, and Seth Govindas did not want to give Urdu its rightful place because it was too closely associated with Muslim culture as well as seen as a rival of Hindi. For example, the UP Congress President, Puroshottamdas Tandon, declared

on 15 June 1948 in Sultanpur, "The Muslims must stop talking about a culture and civilization foreign to our culture and genius. They should accept Indian culture. One culture and one language will pave the way for real unity. Urdu symbolises a foreign culture. Hindi alone can be the unifying factor for all the diverse forces in the country".<sup>9</sup> The extreme stand on the language issue led the Jana Sangh to abandon plans of agitation against Urdu as the Congress Government made no concession to Urdu at all.<sup>10</sup> Under the impact of partition and the Military Operations against Hyderabad in 1947-48, many Hindus who normally spoke Urdu switched over to Hindi.<sup>11</sup>

In pre-independence India, Hindu groups such as the Kayasthas, Khatris, Kashmiri Pandits, and Panjabis (whether Hindu or Sikh) all learnt Urdu. But in the 1990s it is hard to find a non-Muslim under 70 who can read Urdu. Many of the famous Urdu newspapers owned by Hindus such as *Milap* and *Pratap* switched to Hindi or shut down. The fate of Hindu journalism in Urdu is exemplified by the demise of *Sarita* and other monthly journals. This narrowed the Urdu speaking community predominantly to Muslims, although not all Indian Muslims claim Urdu as their native language as evidenced by the cases of Bengali Muslims, Mappillas, Tamil speaking Labbais, and the like. Still collectively, Urdu speakers form a majority of Indian Muslims. Because of the wealth of Islamic literature, *dini madarsas*, schools of religious education retain Urdu as the language of instruction. These schools are attended by Muslims from all over the country, regardless of native language. When the graduates of the religious schools go back to their native lands, they preach in Urdu which has helped the spread of Urdu in non-Urdu Muslim population. The base of Urdu has both shrunk as well as expanded. The almost daily *mushairas*, *qawwali*, and much of the "Hindi" films produced in the studios of Bombay keep Urdu alive. According to the 1981 census, as many as 36, 800, 000 people spoke Urdu, which comes to nearly fifty per cent of total Muslim population making Urdu speakers a majority in the Indian Muslim population. The census officials routinely undercount the number of Urdu speakers by falsely

counting Hindi as the mother tongue of Urdu speakers as evidenced by the enumeration of Hindi as the mother-tongue even of the President of the leading Urdu organization in New Delhi, the Anjuman-i Tarraqi-yi Urdu.<sup>12</sup> In fact the Muslim-Urdu ratio in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan (see table, and map below) is so utterly ridiculous as to make a mockery of the census. The undercount of Urdu is clearly motivated by linguistic rivalry, prejudice against Urdu, a desire to inflate the number of Hindi speakers, and a plain attempt to make no differentiation between Urdu and Hindi.

Table IX  
Languages Spoken by Indian Muslims

<i>Region</i>	<i>Total Muslim Population (Millions)</i>	<i>Total Urdu Speakers (Millions)</i>	<i>Coefficient of Urdu (%)</i>	<i>Main</i>
India	61.42	28.61	48	Urdu
<i>Hindustan</i>				
Bihar	7.59	4.99	65	Urdu
MP	1.81	0.99	55	Urdu
Rajstan	1.78	0.65	37	Urdu
UP	13.68	9.27	67	Urdu
<i>Deccan</i>				
AP	3.68	3.30	91	Urdu
Karnataka	3.11	2.64	85	Urdu
Maharashtra	4.23	3.66	87	Urdu
<i>Other States</i>				
Assam	3.60			Assamese
Gujarat	2.25	0.53	26	Gujarati
Kerala	4.16			Malayalam
Tamilnadu	2.10	0.76	36	Tamil
W. Bengal	9.06	0.95	10	Bangla

Source: Census of India, 1981.

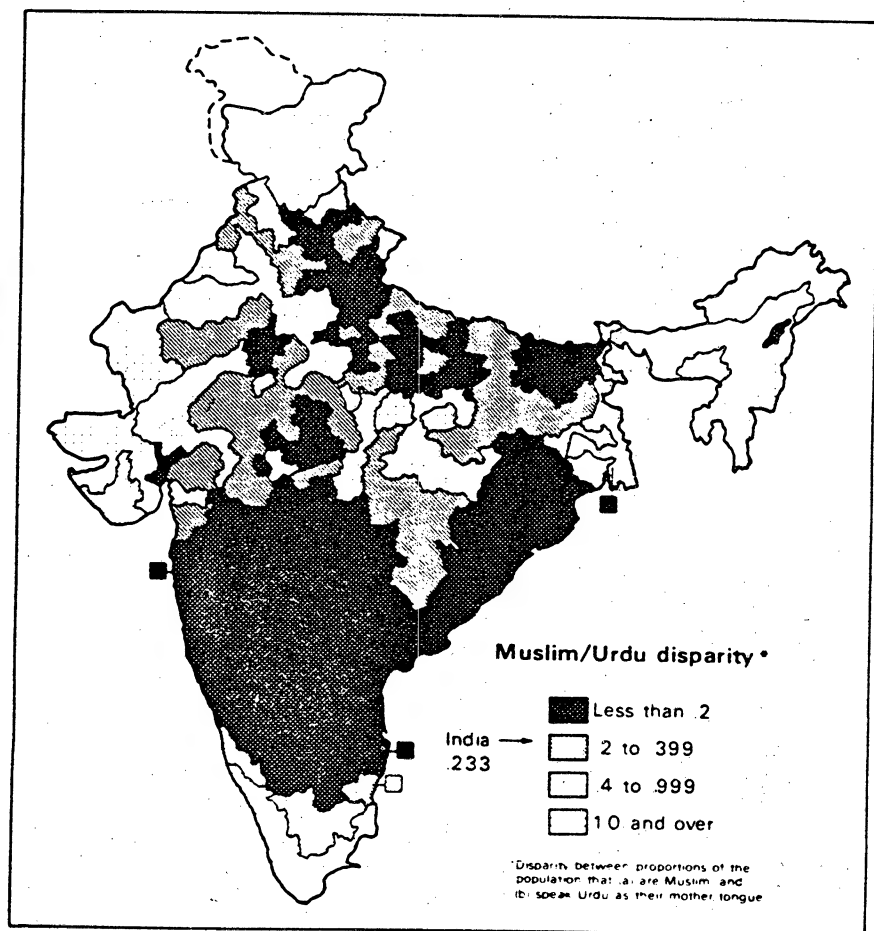


Figure 6. Covariance of Muslim population and Urdu mother tongue

**Map II**  
**Urdu-Muslim Covariance in India**  
 Map Courtesy of: David Sopher, *An Exploration of India*,  
 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1980)

Urdu speakers are thinly dispersed into many States, but as much as 90 per cent are concentrated in Hindustan, comprising of Uttar Pradesh, (32.3 per cent), Bihar (17.4 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (3.5 per cent), and Deccan consisting of Maharashtra (12.8 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (11.5 per cent), Karnataka (9.2), and Tamil Nadu (3.3). Many other States have either Urdu native speakers such as in West Bengal and Gujarat or those whose native language is not Urdu but who use Urdu extensively such as the Kashmiris, Meos, and the Panjabis. The biggest hurdle in the path of Urdu's progress lies in the dispersal of Urdu speakers, since no district, much less a whole State has Urdu majority. See map 2.

### Constitutional Position

Urdu is recognized as one of the languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, adopted in 1950, though it is an official language only in Kashmir, thanks to its Muslim, but non-Urdu majority population. The Andhra Pradesh Official Language Act of 1966, contained provisions relating to the use of Urdu or *any other language or languages in addition to Telugu*, which is declared as the official language of the State. While the attitude of the then AP Chief Minister, Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, hailing from the Circar region of the State was sympathetic to Urdu, P.V. Narasimha Rao, the then Minister for Education and hailing from Telangana region (where Urdu is widely spoken) disfavoured any official status to Urdu.<sup>13</sup> The State of Bihar passed the Bihar Official Language (Amendment) Act, in 1981 giving some recognition to Urdu, followed by a similar act by Uttar Pradesh in 1989. None of the legislations passed are adequate to solve the problem of Urdu, as none accord Urdu the official status that will make it mandatory for Urdu speaking students to learn Urdu, or permit usage of Urdu in state administration. In order for a language to be recognized as a *second official language*, the speakers of that language must constitute at least 30 per cent of the total population. None of the States with Urdu speaking population come any where close to the required percentage. The absolute number of the Urdu

speakers running into several million in each State is disregarded for the purposes of education and usage in administration.

### Strategies of Urdu Speakers

As a thinly dispersed group, it has been difficult for Urdu speakers to launch the kind of agitation (violent street demonstrations, bandhs, and the like) that compels the state to act. Instead Urdu speakers have so far used peaceful and democratic methods of campaigning for their language, such as quiet deputations, petitions, resolutions, and memorandums. The most famous instance is that of the memorandum signed by two million people and submitted in 1954 to the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad by a future President Dr. Zakir Husain. Nothing came of it, due simply to the fact that despite its commitment to a secular, democratic, and pluralist India, the Congress Party even in its decades of domination, 1947-1967, remained firmly in the grip of the Hindu right-wing politicians such as Sardar Patel, K.M. Munshi, Seth Govindas, Pursohottamdas Tandon, and Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh Govind Ballabh Pant, and Sampurnand and others as far as the Muslim and Urdu questions were concerned. The recognition of Urdu as a *second official language* was seen by many in the Congress and other parties as a demand for the further partitions of the country. The partition of the country deprived the Muslim community of its major population concentrations in the East and the West, whose strengths could have been used to exert pressure on a central government to deal equitably with Urdu. With the loss of political weight at the beginning of independence, Muslims were a helpless spectator to the imposition of Hindi spoken by a *minority* of Indians. At this point the leadership of the Anjuman-i Tarraqi-yi Urdu, the main organization promoting the cause of Urdu, made the strategic error of demanding *second official language* status for Urdu in many states, instead of making a minimal demand—given the anti-Urdu climate—for the provision of teaching of Urdu as a required subject from primary through secondary school. The



Anjuman officials argue that the demand for Urdu's recognition as the *second official language* was made only to secure arrangement for the teaching of Urdu in schools and for no other reason.<sup>14</sup> The Anjuman did not realize that any demand for Urdu's official recognition would be seen as demand for a new Pakistan and would not be conceded. The leadership of the Anjuman failed to understand that, demands such as the inclusion of Urdu in official signboards, use of Urdu in courts and administration were all demands of *secondary* importance. A more practical approach would have been to ask for the teaching of Urdu as one of the mandatory subjects—not Urdu medium schools—in all States. Instead of seeking the fullest realization of the Urdu speakers' legitimate rights in one attempt, the Anjuman ought to have sought piecemeal approval of each specific demand, and then after consolidating the gains, the Anjuman leadership should have made further demands. This did not happen, as no party would approve maximalist Muslim demand at the risk of alienating the powerful Hindu right-wing. With a political demand such as the granting of second official status unfulfilled and with no provision for Urdu's teaching, the Urdu-speakers lost on both fronts, political as well as educational. Even a purely educational and cultural demand as the teaching of Urdu was not conceded given the structure of the Three Language Formula.

#### The Question of Urdu in Education

Despite the constitutional right of Urdu speakers, the State Governments of almost all the States have followed discriminatory policies towards Urdu, which have limited its use as the language of instruction as well as a medium of written communication.

The following table reveals the extent of primary education available through Urdu in different States, according to the Report of the Committee for Promotion of Urdu headed by Ali Sardar Jaafari submitted in October 1991.

**Table X**  
**State of Urdu Education in India in 1991**

<i>State</i>	<i>Urdu Speakers (in Lakhs)</i>	<i>No. of State run Urdu Primary Schools</i>
Andhra	42.00	1135
Bihar	69.55	5500
Delhi	30.63	95
Gujarat	6.00	161
Haryana	2.27	0
Himachal	0.13	0
Karnataka	35.00	2853
Maharashtra	43.19	2108
Rajasthan	7.25	73
U.P.	108.00	0
W. Bengal	12.00	220

It is clear that in Uttar Pradesh, the State with the largest number of Urdu speakers, the language has been completely eliminated as a language of instruction even at the primary level. When compared with the several thousand Urdu-medium primary schools immediately before independence, the lack of even a single primary school with Urdu as the medium of instruction stands in glaring contrast. A more convincing evidence of state-sponsored culturecide is hard to imagine. It is inevitable that a lack of Urdu literacy would be reflected in a decline in the circulation of Urdu press. For example Urdu newspapers show a net increase in numbers as seen through the following table but kept far behind the rise in the number and circulations of newspapers in other languages.

Table XI  
Urdu Newspapers Growth and Decline

Language	1983		1980		1970		1960	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
English	3,840	18.50	3,440	18.96	2,247	20.36	1,647	20.52
Hindi	5,936	28.60	4,946	27.27	2,694	24.24	1,532	19.09
Urdu	1,378	6.64	1,234	6.80	898	8.14	680	8.47
Regional Languages	7,278	35.06	6,493	35.79	3,974	36.01	2,718	33.86
Others	2,326	11.21	2,027	11.17	1,223	11.08	1,449	18.05
Total	20,758	100.01	18,140	99.99	11,036	100.00	8,026	99.99

Source: Compiled from Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Press in India*, 1984, I (Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1986), p.21; *Press in India*, 1981, I (Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1978), p.27; *Press in India*, 1971, I (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1971), p.19; *Annual Report of the Registry of Newspapers for India* 1961, I (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1961), p.19.

Source: Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (New Delhi: Sage, 1991); p. 121.<sup>15</sup>

The decline of Urdu literacy is further evidenced by the sale of Urdu books in different States of the country. According to Shahid Siddiqi, manager of Maktabah-i Jamia Limited, the leading publisher and distributor of Urdu books, the largest number of the Maktabah's books are sold in Kashmir, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and only then in Uttar Pradesh in 1990.<sup>16</sup> This state of affairs for Urdu in Uttar Pradesh is perhaps the most conclusive evidence of Urdu's decline in its own homeland. The crux of the problem lies in the manner in which languages are taught in Indian schools, namely, by way of the Three Language Formula.

The Three Language Formula initiated in 1956 provided for the teaching of Hindi, English, and the regional, that is, state language (*not mother tongue*) in the so called non-Hindi speaking States, and for Hindi, English and a modern Indian language, preferably a South Indian language in the so-called Hindi states. This left no room for Urdu, as Urdu speakers have no home state of their own. A revised formula that takes cognizance of the Urdu speakers' rights, such as the one recommended by the I.K. Gujral Committee in 1975 and Ali Sardar Jaafari Committee Report in 1991 should be able to secure the provision of Urdu in schools. Even when a G.O. (Government Order) is issued, the task of its implementation in letter and spirit remains, and only the acute vigilance of Urdu speakers in monitoring the faithful administration of a G.O. can ensure the fulfillment of Urdu rights.

### **Self-Help and Self-Sufficiency**

Until genuinely secular forces come to power in India and direct public policy to promote cultural pluralism, Muslim issues and the question of Urdu cannot be solved by state help alone. Parallel to the demands on the state, Urdu speakers should initiate provision of primary through secondary education in schools with English as the language of instruction along with Urdu only as a required subject of study. There is no use having Urdu medium schools as Muslims will not be able to compete with others if their education is through Urdu. Excellent examples of Muslim self-help is provided in the schools established by the Dino Taalimi Council in Uttar Pradesh since 1959, the Anjuman-i Islam schools in Maharashtra, and various private efforts in Hyderabad and other towns. Together these schools do not constitute even a fraction of those run by the state or private organizations. But the spirit behind the community efforts is worth emulating. The difficulties in the promotion and steps to reverse the decline of Urdu literacy have been well-documented by the I.K. Gujral Committee (1975) and the Jafari Committee of 1990. The point now is one of implementation

which requires political will. In the meanwhile, Urdu speakers will need to concentrate on the following issues:

Despite the close association of Urdu with Muslim culture, campaign for the advancement of Urdu must be pursued on a strictly nondenominational basis as the informal rules of politics in India do not permit the mixing up of religion and language. It is both strategically astute as well as morally sound to delink Muslim issues and Urdu, for in addition to Muslims, many Hindus and Sikhs continue to be Urdu's strong supporters. The delayed and grudging acceptance of the Panjabi Suba in 1966 by the Union government is a prime example of the state's reluctance to accord demands based on a combination of religious and linguistic identity.

Intensified efforts to open primary through secondary schools in which Urdu is taught as one of the subjects, in every village in the rural areas, and every municipal ward in the urban areas.

In government schools, efforts must be made to ensure availability of Urdu teachers, textbooks, and students simultaneously.

Gradual conversion of Urdu medium schools into English medium.

Centralized production, promotion, and distribution of Urdu textbooks from primary-secondary schools. This ought to be a primary task of the state-funded Urdu academies which have been established in many parts of the country for some time.

Each state or union territory must have at least one or as many as needed number of Urdu teacher training schools, as often Urdu classes are taught by teachers who cannot even read Urdu.

Taking advantage of new technologies, Urdu speakers should vigorously increase production of Urdu films, video, and audio-cassettes, in order to foil the attempts to deprive Urdu-speakers of their linguistic heritage.

Continued pressure on the state to eliminate roadblocks in the path of Urdu education, such as minimum number of students, manipulation of language formulae, and the like.

Finally, Urdu speakers cannot depend on the goodwill of the state. Since Urdu is an essential ingredient of Muslim identity, its speakers' own language-loyalty can make that language's future bright.

## Notes

1. Muhammad Mujib, "The Urdu Language and Indian Muslim Culture", *Islamic Culture* (July 1937); p. 345; Sayyid Abid Husain, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, (London: Asia, 1965); p. 219; Maulana Muhammad Ali Jawhar cited in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, edited by William Theodore de Bary and others (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); p. 780; Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957); p. 266.
2. Joshua Fishman, *Socio-Linguistics*, (Rowley, MA: Newberry Publications, 1971); p. 1.
3. Maulavi Sayyid Ahmad, *Farhang-i Asafiya*, first published in 1896, quoted in *Waza Istilahat* by Maulavi Wahiduddin Salim, (New Delhi: Tarraqi Urdu Bureau, 1980), pp. 168-69. See also Hasanuddin Ahmad, *Urdu Alfaz Shumari*, (Hyderabad: Wila Academy, 1976).
4. Sampuranand, *Memories and Reflections*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962); pp. 92-93. Some writers seek to deny Urdu's distinctiveness by claiming, for instance, Deccani proto-Urdu to be Hindi see B.R. Saksena, *Dakhini Hindi*, (Allahabad, 1952).
5. Husain B. Tyabji, the biographer of Badruddin Tyabji, in a revealing comment informs his readers that "in 1859, the family decided to give up Gujarati which had till then been their language and to adopt Hindustani. From that time they were only to speak Hindustani. Anyone speaking Gujarati was to pay a fine." See *Badruddin Tyabji*, (Bombay: Thacker, 1952); pp. 14-15. I am very grateful to Prof. Theodore P. Wright, Jr. for this reference. Similarly, Asaf Ali Asghar Fayzi, "strongly advocate its [Urdu's] wider cultivation for understanding the spirit of Indian Islam", quoted in *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan, 1857-1968*, edited by Aziz Ahmad and Gustav von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1970). Another Ismaili Sir Akbar Haydari, the Prime Minister of the Nizam was prominent in the conception and the establishment of Csmania University.
6. Ghulam Mahmud Banatwala, *Muslim League Azadi ke Baad* (Bombay: Alawi Book Depot, 1979).

7. D. Gidwani, "Wrong Script: War of Words over Urdu", *India Today* (28 February 1994); p. 28.
8. Sayyid Ahmad Khan cited in Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); p. 18.
9. *National Herald*, (Lucknow) 15 June 1948, p. 7, cited in B.D. Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990); p. 114.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-29.
11. One can even argue that the tendency to switch linguistic loyalty from Urdu to Hindi began in the pre-independence era, note, for instance, Munshi Premchand's, (1880-1936) case, who began writing in Urdu but ended his literary career as a Hindi writer. However a conference held in Lucknow in November 1973 exclusively of non-Muslim Urdu writers affirmed its allegiance to Urdu. See *Yadgar Jarida All India Ghayr Muslim Urdu Musanifin Conference* (Lucknow, 1973). Particularly noteworthy is the valiant effort of Hindus in the preservation of Urdu. Numerous Hindus have done important and commendable work for Urdu.
12. See Sayyid Hamid, "Mardum Shumari Ya Mardum Bizari", *Nida-i Millat*, (24 March 1991); pp. 11-12.
13. Maulavi Habiburrahman, *Chand Yaddashtain*, (Karachi: Bahadur Yar Jang Academy, 1986).
14. Author's personal interview with Prof. Aal-i Ahmad Surur, Secretary-General of the Anjuman, 1956-74. Aligarh, August 4, 1990.
15. The Urdu press shows inexplicable fluctuations of both growth and decline in numbers and circulation. See Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); p. 154; a Government of India publication called *Press in India*, (Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1986); and G.D. Chandan, "Power and Poverty of Urdu Press", *Radiance* (5 April 1992); p. 89.
16. Author's personal interview with Shahid Siddiqi Sahib in New Delhi, 5 August 1990.

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## Chapter 6

# Hindu Majority Views, Attitudes, and Demands of the Muslims

The non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must adopt Hindu culture and language, must either learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. they must not only give UP their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead—in a word they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights.

M.S. Golwalkar \*

The fate of India is largely tied up with the Hindu outlook. If the present Hindu outlook does not change radically, I am quite sure that India is doomed. The Muslim outlook may be and, I think, is often worse. But it does not make very much difference to the future of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru \*\*

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\* M.S. Golwalkar. *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (4th edition, Nagpur: Bharat Prakshan, 1947; pp. 55-56.

\*\* Nehru's letter to K.N. Katju, 17 November 1953, cited in S.Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol. 3, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979): p. 206.

The Muslim situation in India can improve or deteriorate, or remain the same as it does in the mid 1990s depending on the dynamics of its interaction with the larger Indian society in which Hindus constitute the majority. What are some of the Hindu majority elite (politicians, journalists, and scholars) perceptions of the Muslim minority question in contemporary India? Where do the Muslims fit in Hindu majority visions of India? What are some of the demands that the Hindu majority makes upon Muslims as a "price" for their full incorporation into the mainstream of the Indian society? This will be examined in some detail as it relates to the political system through which public policy is defined and executive decisions made and implemented affecting all segments of the Indian society. In a perceptive comment, historian Aziz Ahmad speaks of the majority community's attitudes as represented by the dominant political party:

From the 1890s the Indian National Congress, in its approach to the Muslim question, shows two divergent developments. The anti-Muslim faction was led by Tilak, the liberal one by Gokhale. The factions merged under the tolerant guidance of Gandhi in 1919, only to be polarized once again, after the collapse of the Khilafat Movement in 1924, into two wings, the liberal one of Motilal Nehru, and its antithesis the orthodox Hindu one led by Madan Mohan Malavia and Lala Lajpat Rai. In the latter 1930s and 1940s the liberal faction spoke with two voices, that of [C.] Rajagopalacharya conceding Muslims the right of self-determination, and of Jawaharlal Nehru withholding it and offering secular integration. The anti-Muslim faction was led during this period by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel; while Gandhi occupied a middle position, linking and balancing the two.<sup>1</sup>

In the post-independence period, despite Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's valiant effort to curb anti-Muslim violence, to prevent Urdu's elimination from schools and administration, and to ensure fairness to the Muslims in public employment, his party remained firmly in the grip of Hindu radical right-wingers known as Patelites, after the late Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The views and attitudes of the Hindu radical

right, whether belonging to the Patelites in the Congress Party or the RSS-BJP need to be examined and contrasted with those of the centerist and Leftists whether in the Congress Party or the two Communist Parties, as they relate to the questions of (1) medieval and modern periods of Indian history, and contemporary politics; (2) issues of religion, culture, language and education; (3) population growth; (4) public employment, and finally, (5) communal riots.

### **Medieval and Modern Indian History and Muslim Role**

The Hindu right-wing regards medieval period of Indian history as an era of foreign rule, which oppressed the local Hindu population by destroying temples and erecting mosques atop. The Hindus were given the option of conversion to Islam or death. Indian languages were discouraged, whereas Persian and Urdu promoted. Muslims never felt a belonging to India; which ultimately led to the bifurcation of motherland into India and Pakistan. Muslims are responsible for dismembering mother India in 1947. Not satisfied with that some of them wanted to remain separate, as evidenced in the case of Hyderabad's bid for independence. Muslim separatism is illustrated by the Kashmiri demand for secession from India. Muslims raise pro-Pakistan slogans, mourn death of Pakistani leaders, and cheer Pakistani sportsmen. The extra-territorial loyalty of Muslims is manifested by their excessive preoccupation with events in the Middle East, such as the desecration of al-Aqsa mosque in occupied Jerusalem. In contrast, Muslims are lukewarm in celebrating Indian national holidays and folk festivals. Muslims should abolish political organizations such as the Muslim League and Ittihad al-Muslimin, which promote separatism and communalism.<sup>2</sup>

The secularist position regards the medieval period of history as part of Indian and not foreign rule as Muslims settled in India. Resources did not drain out of India as they did during the British rule. Oppression by Muslim rulers was no different than by the Hindu rajas. The tales of Muslim tyranny are

overplayed. Emperors like Aurangzeb also built temples if he destroyed some. Hindu rajas also plundered temples. Muslim kings hired Hindu soldiers in the army.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding more recent history, the liberal Hindu position takes the view that partition is as much the result of the narrow mindedness of some of the Congress leaders as that of the Muslim League. Muslims alone are not responsible for partition. The Kashmiris sided with India against Pakistan until mismanagement of Kashmir affairs by New Delhi compelled the Kashmiri nationalists to take up arms.<sup>4</sup> As to the alleged Muslim cheering of Pakistani sportsmen, it should not be forgotten that Muslim captains such as the Nawab of Pataudi and Muhammad Azharuddin have led the national cricket teams to victory on many occasions. On the Muslim interest in the Middle Eastern affairs, liberal Hindus argue that the Muslim involvement is not against the national interests of India, in fact the Muslims are an asset in dealing with the Arab world. India's support to the Palestinian cause stems not from a desire to please Muslims but is in fact consistent with the national policy of fair play for the oppressed groups everywhere. Finally, it is untrue to say that Muslims are lukewarm in patriotism. The bravery of Muslim military officers and jawans in India's wars with China and Pakistan is ample proof of Muslim fidelity to the nation.

### **Religion, Culture, Language, and Education**

Hindu rightists, like K.R.Malkani, a journalist, demand Muslims to accept that not only Islam but Hinduism is also a true religion.<sup>5</sup> According to Balraj Madhok, a former President of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (an earlier incarnation of the BJP), "Islam is a form of worship like so many forms and ways of worship co-existing in India. A Mohammadi Panth has as secure a place in India as a Sikh Panth or a Jain Panth. But to talk of Muslims in India having a separate culture, and separate way of life distinct from Indian culture and Indian way of life is wrong."<sup>6</sup> Muslims, according to the Hindu assimilationists, must give up Arabic/Persian personal names, celebrate Hindu festivals such as Dipavali, Dushera, Holi, Ganapati, and the like,

and must demonstrate respect to Hindu epics such as *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.<sup>7</sup> To many Hindu rightists Urdu language and script are the prime examples representing foreign influences, as it uses Arabic/Persian alphabet and vocabulary and its literary imagery is located in Iran, Turan and Arabia, and not in India.<sup>8</sup> Separatism among the Indian Muslims is sustained by minority educational institutions, of which Aligarh Muslim University is the best example.<sup>9</sup> Therefore Muslims, according to Madhok, Malkani, Golwalkar, and others, must be Indianized, by giving up foreign culture symbolized by names, script, and lack of respect for Hindu epics and participation in Hindu festivals.<sup>10</sup> The liberal Hindu point of view takes the stand that India is a multi-lingual and multi-religious society. Attempts to impose uniformity are neither possible nor desirable. Muslims are likely to take more interest in the particular Indian epics and heroes if their life and property are secure, impediments in the teaching of Urdu are removed, and further threats to their own particular culture are withdrawn. Educational rights of the minorities are granted in the Constitution and taking away these rights would be an unfair measure. Indianization is therefore a mischievous slogan.

### Population Growth

One of the major sore points with the Hindu rightists is the alleged increase in Muslim population in proportions larger than the national average, through uncontrolled birthrate, illegal migration, and conversion. According to this theory, Muslims reject family planning measures. An extreme example of this negative perception of Muslim response to birth control is found in the cartoon that depicts a polygamous Muslim with his four wives proclaiming "*ham panch hamare pachis*" (We five, our twenty five children), in opposition to the official slogan of the family planning agencies that calls for "*Ham do hamare do*",<sup>11</sup> (We two, our two children). Muslims resist incorporation into the national mainstream by refusing to accept a uniform national civil code applicable to all Indians regardless of religious affiliation. Fears are often expressed about the increase in

Muslim population through what is called infiltration from the neighbouring Muslim states of Pakistan and Bangladesh. One writer has spoken even of "Bangladeshization"<sup>12</sup>, of India, as a result of influx of Muslims into Assam, Bihar, and West Bengal. Yet another source of Muslim population increase is conversion to Islam. The most spectacular example is the conversion of the former untouchables in Meenakshipuram village in Tamilnadu in 1981.<sup>13</sup> Many Hindu right-wing writers felt that the conversions were part of an Arab plot to Islamize India through the petro-dollars sent by wealthy sheikhs and Indian Muslims working in the Persian Gulf states. No less than a person as Indira Gandhi hinted at the Arab connection to the Gulf money.<sup>14</sup> The failure to understand change of religion as part of religious freedom is best illustrated in the case of Purshottamdas Tandon, who asserted in the Constituent Assembly that

We Congressmen deem it very improper to convert from one to another religion or to take part part in such activities and we are not in favour of this and most Congressmen are opposed to this idea of propagation.<sup>15</sup>

Although, the Indian Constitution allows change of religious affiliation, this right is some times restricted, as exemplified by a Government Order of the State of Andhra Pradesh which prohibits change of religion to Islam or Christianity by civil servants of Scheduled Caste origin.<sup>16</sup>

However, the liberal Hindu position maintains that Muslim rejection of family planning has not been scientifically established. There is no significant difference between Muslim and Hindu birthrate among the families of same economic class. Poorer families tend to have a higher birthrate and since most Muslims are relatively poorer than most Hindus, Muslims tend to have bigger families. Thus relatively higher birthrate among Muslims is a function of poverty, and not part of a grand conspiracy to de-Hinduize India.<sup>17</sup> The migration from Bangladesh is taking place due to economic problems and scarcity of land, and not due to a calculated scheme to change India's demography. In any event Bengali immigrants include both Hindus and Muslims. Change of religion is a matter of



personal choice, and some people are switching over to other religions owing to the oppressive caste system, and due to the perception, if not the reality, of Islam as an egalitarian faith. The demand for change in personal law should be treated as an issue of women's rights and not one of national uniformity.<sup>18</sup>

### **Public Employment**

The Hindu Rightists consider the question of Muslim proportion in the state employment as another instance of Muslim appeasement by the government. In their imagination, even a mere discussion of Muslim proportion in civil service itself amounts to the promotion of separatism among the minorities and extension of special treatment at the expense of others. Examples of high profile and visible Muslim presidents, governors, judges, and military officers is cited as evidence of fair play. Institutions such as the national and state minorities commissions create sense of separateness among the Muslims and should, therefore, be replaced by Human Rights Commissions.<sup>19</sup> These measures have in fact been taken by the BJP Governments in UP and MP in 1992. The liberal Hindu position says that the precipitous decline of Muslims in the public sector employment is undeniable. All appropriate measures, including reservation on the model of Kerala, should be introduced to improve employment of the Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

### **Communal Riots**

Pakistani agents, anti-national Muslims, and Arab money is responsible for riots. The riots are invariably started by Muslims who attack police and security forces.<sup>21</sup> The liberal Hindu position takes the view that no matter who starts the riots, and no matter what the immediate causes triggering off the riots are, in the end it is the Muslims who suffer most, be it in terms of numbers of killed, wounded, or arrested or properties destroyed. Economically it is the poor Muslim businesses and daily wage earners who suffer the most. The partiality of police and paramilitary forces in killing innocent Muslims has been documented by neutral and international observers as

exemplified by the PAC's indictment by Amnesty International in the Meerut killings of 1987.<sup>22</sup>

The foregoing examples of majority Hindu attitudes towards the Muslims came from North India, which was the main battleground of the Hindu-Muslim hostilities leading up to the partition of the country. But it would be unwise to confine the scope of Hindu-Muslim differences only to the North. So it is necessary to examine the attitudes of the Hindu elite toward Muslims in other parts of the country. Shiv Sena (Hindu god Shiva's army) in Maharashtra and the Telugu Desham Party (party of the Telugu speaking people) are the two groups investigated as examples of the Hindu right wing in areas other than North India. The exercise is done in the light of generalizations about dominant majorities' policies towards minorities proposed by George E. Simpson in his theory of assimilation, both forced and induced. Simpson says:

One way to 'solve' the problem is to eliminate the minority—as minority... Dominant groups have frequently adopted an extreme ethnocentrism that refused minorities the right to practice their own religion, speak their own language, follow their own customs. The Czarist regime went through periods of vigorous Russification during which the only alternatives available to minorities who wished to preserve their identity were rigid segregation, expulsion, extermination. Perhaps the most extreme manifestation of forced assimilation was the Nazi regime, with its ideology of a monocultural, monolingual, monoracial people ruled by an authoritarian State. The Nazi policy went beyond forced assimilation, of course, for its doctrine of race superiority asserted that some groups were unassimilable. For them forced population transfers and extermination were the policies adopted.<sup>23</sup>

### **Shiv Sena of Maharashtra**

The Shiv Sena was formally launched in 1966 as an organization dedicated to protect and promote what it perceived to be the interests of the Maharashtrians in Bombay and elsewhere in the state.<sup>24</sup> It grew out of the notion that Maharashtrians were being discriminated against in employment in the capital city of their own state. South Indians, according to Shiv Sena, were grabbing

most white collar jobs in Bombay thereby depriving the "sons of the soil". But a monocultural and homogeneous nation is the party's vision of the future. Prior to the formal beginning of the party, the Shiv Sena leader, Bal Thackeray, had been an active cartoonist and journalist since 1960 through his newspaper, *Marmik*, published in Marathi language.

The Indian media seem to have focussed mostly on Shiv Sena's anti-South Indian rhetoric and attack on businessmen belonging to that group such as Udipi restaurants in particular.<sup>25</sup> Less attention has been paid to the Sena's anti-Muslim fulminations and attacks on Muslim individuals and property. Scholars like Mary Katzenstein and Dipankar Gupta<sup>26</sup> who worked extensively on the Shiv Sena have demonstrated that it has been consistent in its militant anti-Muslim positions. A close scrutiny of *Marmik* editorials and cartoons since 1960 shows story after story of alleged Muslim misdeeds against India and conspiracy with and espionage for Pakistan. The Bombay municipal elections of 1968 saw a decline in the Sena's anti-South Indian tirades partly due to its efforts to extend its appeal outside the Maharashtrians to include other ethno-linguistic groups of South Indian origin resident in Bombay. However, Shiv Sena's verbal attacks in its newspaper and physical violence against Muslims did not cease. Indeed the attacks seem to have intensified after the elections to the Bombay Municipal Corporation in 1973, especially during the controversy over the singing of Vande Mataram, a Bengali Hindu song offensive to Muslims because of references to deities.<sup>27</sup> For according to Manohar Joshi, a prominent Shiv Sena leader: "A South Indian is still an Indian. But every Muslim's heart belongs to the Muslim League, to their green flag and to Pakistan."<sup>28</sup> It follows then that his party's policy toward Muslims stems from Thackeray's assertion that

India belongs to Hindus and Muslims can stay here only on our conditions... We want the government to enforce a common civil code... Those who are not prepared to obey laws applicable to all citizens of India have no right to stay in our country. The first loyalty of Muslims should be to India.<sup>29</sup>

According to one of the posters displayed by the Shiv Sena during a state assembly byelection in 1988, "Hinduism and Indian nationalism are two sides of the same coin"<sup>30</sup> and the Sena's goal was proclaimed to be the establishment of "Hindu *rashtra* and the subjugation of Muslims".<sup>31</sup> During the same election Thackeray vowed, as evidenced by the audiotape of the election meeting produced at a trial, that if the Shiv Sena came to power, "then everybody would have to be converted to Hinduism."<sup>32</sup> Addressing a meeting in Nagpur on 19 August 1989, after the conclusion of an SS-BJP electoral alliance in the Eighth Lok Sabha elections, Bal Thackeray declared that together with the BJP "we will hoist the Hindu saffron flag over the *mantralaya*" (State secretariat building).<sup>33</sup> Moreover, his party's leader in the Bombay Municipal Corporation, Divakar Ravate, appealed to Hindu merchants of Bombay to donate money to the Shiv Sena in order to combat what he terms "Muslim aggression" against Hindu life and property.<sup>34</sup> Thackeray himself publicly praised Nathuram Godse, Mahatma Gandhi's assassin, as a patriot whose statutes, he predicted, would one day adorn the squares of Bombay instead of those of the Father of the Nation.<sup>35</sup>

Thus it is obvious that to the extent that it concerns minorities, the Shiv Sena policy is very similar to the forced assimilation policy advocated by extreme right-wing groups. Another similarity between the Sena and these is their mutual disapproval of communism. The Indian Communists are frequently reviled in the party paper and Thackeray has himself glorified Hitler in its pages. Indeed he advocates "benevolent dictatorship" as a solution for India's various problems. It is on record that Thackeray welcomed the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Emergency of 1975-77, and unlike other communal organizations, the Shiv Sena was not banned then as a reward for its cooperation with the government. The intensity of Shiv Sena violence against Muslims during communal riots in Thane, Bombay, Bhivandi, Aurangabad, and other places in Maharashtra in 1984, shows in this way that it shares many of the characteristics associated with the BJP and RSS.<sup>36</sup> It is hardly

a coincidence that most of the top leaders of the RSS have come from Maharashtra from its founder K.B. Hedgewar to M.S. Golwalkar to Balasahib Deoras.

While the rest of India expressed sorrow over the razing of Babari Masjid on 6 December 1992, Thackeray proclaimed it to be the happiest day of his life. In fact he publicly claimed that his Shiv Sainiks (SS) were responsible for the Masjid's sack. Then in January 1993, his SS gangs with total collaboration of the Maharashtra state police perpetrated the bloodiest pogrom in India's recent history. Justifying the pogrom, he said in an interview with *Time*, "there is nothing wrong, if they [Muslims] are treated as Jews were in Nazi Germany... If they are not going away, kick them out!"<sup>37</sup>

#### **Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh**

Unlike the Shiv Sena, the public policy of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which remained in power between 1983-89 and since 1994 in Andhra Pradesh is a lot less clear. First, there is no official party policy document on this issue. Secondly, references to Muslims in the election manifestos of the party came under the general rubric of "secularism" and they too are so vague as to render them meaningless.<sup>38</sup> In the absence of a clearly laid out policy, one must depend on occasional statements of the party leaders, particularly of Chief Minister N.T. Ramarao, popularly known as NTR.

His party and the Andhra Pradesh Muslims began as strangers. As a Telugu movie actor, NTR was virtually unknown among Urdu-speaking, town-dwelling Muslims. He knew few Muslims and probably none in Hyderabad, the state capital. In the state assembly elections of January 1983 which the Telugu Desam contested for the first time, there was an attempt on the part of the Muslim leadership under the now defunct Muslim United Front, to bargain with Ramarao for redressal of long-standing Muslim grievances centering on Urdu, job opportunities and the like in return for Muslim votes. Nothing came of the negotiations and in any case the Telugu Desam won

the elections with an impressive majority without Muslim help and formed the government.

The new government had been in power for barely a year when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi attempted to destabilize through induced defections from Ramarao's party with the support provided by the Congress Opposition and the Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin with its five Assembly seats. Therefore, while the attempt to topple NTR's ministry succeeded, it also worsened the Telugu Desam's relations with the Muslim community as the Majlis' support for the anti-NTR coalition in the state Assembly was seen as the responsibility of the whole Muslim community.

Ironically, bloody riots occurred in State capital when the party captured power in January 1983 in which the first Muslim to be killed was a Telugu poet, Ghulam Yasin. Then in September 1984 occurred one of the bloodiest Hindu-Muslim riots in Hyderabad's history, rendering the Telugu Desam anathema to many Muslims. The old city of Hyderabad was in curfew again when NTR was restored to power. Between that year and 1989 no major riot took place in the state which may be due to the relatively secure political position of NTR.

It was during this time that the ominous views of two persons associated with the state government came out. In an election speech in March 1985, the Minister for Civil Supplies, A. Satyanarayana, warned "Muslims who did not vote for the Telugu Desam would be deported to Pakistan."<sup>39</sup> Even more seriously, the judicial commission appointed by the State Government to look into the riots of September 1984 squarely blamed Muslims for the eruption of violence. The commission headed by Justice M. Krishnarao, concluded that the riots were caused by

an induced influx of Muslims from parts of old Hyderabad State into the city, and infusion of Gulf money which resulted in an gradual change in the outlook and behaviour of the inhabitants towards groups of persons, viz. Hindus, living in small numbers in the old city. These changes gradually led to frequent provocative acts during Hindu festivals resulting in

sporadic clashes, stabbing, arson, looting and the like... at least from 1980 onwards... almost every disturbance was caused by the Muslims hitting at Hindus when there was no provocation against them.<sup>40</sup>

In identifying concrete measures to eradicate the communal divide, the Commission demanded that the Muslim community take a realistic view and shed their orthodoxy and move along the mainstream of public and social life with other communities, for example by abolishing 'pardah' system, adopting family planning and expressing their willingness for uniform civil code.<sup>41</sup>

It strongly criticized the government for granting religious freedom "in the name of fundamental rights" and for the "illogical mixing of politics and religion, education and other fields of public welfare." The only point addressed to the Hindu community asked them to "become familiar with the teachings of Mohammad the Prophet and well-known Muslim saints."<sup>42</sup>

Some of the actions of N.T. Ramarao, though not necessarily against Muslims, are still questionable in terms of the norms of behaviour for a Chief Minister of what is officially a secular state. For instance, on a trip to the United States in 1983, he found nothing objectionable in spending State funds on silver medallions with Hindu gods' images for distribution among American citizens of Telugu-speaking origin as part of a promotion kit to invite investments in Andhra Pradesh.<sup>43</sup> Earlier, his party required its members to take an oath of loyalty to the *Telugu talli*, Telugu mother, an act obviously amounting to *shirk*, associating God with false gods.<sup>44</sup>

Ramarao's vision of Andhra's "golden age", indeed is the period of Vijayanagara kingdom, although it is common knowledge that the Qutb Shahi sultans of Golconda (fifteenth to seventeenth centuries) patronized Telugu as well as Muslim culture. The former Chief Minister's heroes of modern India include Swami Vivekananda, whom he imitates in dress. While most Muslim issues remain unresolved in the State, NTR obstructed the functioning of a Muslim-established medical school. Invoking an obscure law, he ordered the interception of

mail to and from five Muslim organizations in the state, a clear violation of basic rights in the country. While the Muslim leadership in the state spoke with one voice on the question of Muslim Personal Law, the TDP members voted against it in the Lok Sabha when the issue came up in the national Parliament. No wonder that the Muslim community breathed a sigh of relief when the Telugu Desam lost power in the election of 1989.<sup>45</sup>

Judging from the few statements of the Telugu Desam leaders and the actions of the state government, it appears that its policy toward Muslims is akin to that of the Patelites in the post-independence Congress, thus falling somewhere between extreme Right-wing Hindu militants and liberal Hindus such as the Nehruvians in the Congress. The Telugu Desam policy may be termed peacefully induced assimilation as opposed to forced assimilation as advocated by the RSS, Shiv Sena and the like.

In conclusion, the attitude of Hindu rightists toward religious minorities is guided by one central feature of Hinduism: it is an inclusive religion. Unlike Islam and Christianity, which are exclusive religions that prescribe rules for membership, insist on adherence to specific dogmas and rules of conduct, Hindus have no clear rules as to what constitutes a Hindu. The Hindus view anyone who observes any Hindu rituals, worships any Hindu deities, or philosophically subscribes to any elements of Hinduism as a Hindu.

Hinduism is inclusive in a second sense as well. Hindus regard religions that originated in India, including Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism as Hindu. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution declares Buddhists, Jains, and even Sikhs as part of the Hindu fold. The tendency of Hinduism to absorb other religions is threatening to Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. The tragic end of Buddhism, a religion deeply committed to non-violence, and its expulsion to South-east Asia and the absorption of tribal religions into the Hindu fold, exemplified by the abolition of the tribal religions as census categories, is deeply troubling to the Muslims.<sup>46</sup> The Indian Constitution flaunts assimilation when it includes Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs among the Hindu category in Article 25. The Hindu sense of order



demands absorption of tribal and linguistic minorities. Only groups with strong religio-cultural traditions such as Muslims, Sikhs, Goan Catholics, and Christian Nagas and Mizos have so far defied Hindu attempts at absorption by legislation or Sanskritization.

In the face of the *Hindutva* initiated by BJP and the RSS, the commitment of the Nehruvians in the Congress, the two Communist Parties, and the leaders like the former Prime Minister V.P. Singh and others in the Janata Party offer rays of hope against the assimilationist pressure of Hindu Right-wing led by the Patelites in the Congress Party, RSS, BJP, Shiv Sena, and the Telugu Desam.

#### Notes

1. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); p. 267; see also Mushirul Hasan, "Communal and Revivalist Trends in Congress, ", pp. 199-223, in his *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India*, (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1981); Francis Robinson, "The Congress and the Muslims," pp. 162-183, in *The Indian National Congress and the Indian Society, 1885-1985*, edited by Francis Robinson and Paul Brass (New Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1987). The nexus between the Congress and the communalists is discussed in Gordon Richard's "The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915-1926", *Modern Asian Studies* (July 1975); pp. 145-203. Sardar Patel once said: "In Congress there are those... who feel that they will be able to crush the RSS with danda. Danda is meant for thieves. RSS men are patriots, they love their country." Cited in Sardar Patel, *Indian Problems* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1949); pp. 58-59. Mrs. Indira Gandhi actively courted the RSS after 1980, and her son and successor received active RSS help in the 1985 election. See A.G. Noorani's article noted below, in footnote no.14. See also, A.K. Subbiah, "There is a Sub-Terranean Connection between Mrs. Gandhi and RSS", *Indian Express* (14 August 1983).

2. This is the line of argument presented in the RSS and BJP publications such as *Organiser* and *Panchjanya*. In the 1960s, Baburao Patel's *Mother India* articulated the same views. The Hindu radical right-wing's interpretation of Indian history is found in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, 11 vols, (Bombay, 1951-77) edited by R.C. Majumdar, and published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, funded by Birla, a Marwari magnate.
3. M.L. Handa neatly states the liberal version of Indian history in his "Indian Historiography: Writing and Rewriting Indian History", *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 17, nos. 3-4 (1982); pp. 217-34.
4. PUCL and PUDR. Reports on Kashmir issued since 1990.
5. K.R. Malkani, "Resolving Religio-Cultural Differences in the Service of the Indian People", *Manthan* (June 1988) and "Justice for All and Appeasement of None", *Manthan* (September 1989).
6. Balraj Madhok, *Indianisation*, (New Delhi: S. Chand, 1970); p. 82.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 83. A similar list of demands of Muslims is found in S.K. Ghosh, *Muslims in Indian Democracy* (New Delhi, 1984); pp. 143-85. Examples of non-elite Hindu stereotypes of Muslims is discussed by Theodore P. Wright, Jr. in his paper "Hindu Stereotypes of Islam and Muslims in South Asia," read at the International Seminar on Islam and Muslims in South Asia, Islamabad, Pakistan, March 1986.
8. In making this accusation, many Congress leaders share the RSS/BJP views, see for example, Sampurnand, *Memories and Reflections* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962); pp. 92-93.
9. K.M. Joshi, cited in *The Dialogue between Hindus and Muslims*, edited by S. Ameenul Hasan Rizvi (New Delhi: Crescent Publishing House, 1986); p. 19.
10. K.R. Malkani, op.cit. M.S. Golwalkar, *Sri Guraji ke Muslim Samasya par Vichar* (New Delhi: Suruchi, 1979); and the same author's, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, (Nagpur: Bharat Publications, 1939). See also Paola Bacchetta, "Muslim Women in the RSS Discourse: Eroticising Relations of Domination/Subordination", *Committee on South Asian Women Bulletin* 8, no. 3-4, (September 1993); pp. 14-20.
11. *Indian Demographer*, edited by Sudhir Hendre, vol. 1, no. 2 (1972); p. 9.
12. Sanjoy Hazarika, "Bangladeshisation of India", *Telegraph*, (Calcutta, 2 March 1992). Hazarika subsequently retracted

- from the story in a conversation with the author in November 1993 at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The debate on migration is covered in Theodore P. Wright, Jr., "The Ethnic Numbers Game in India: Hindu-Muslim Conflicts over Conversion, Family Planning, Migration, and the Census", pp. 405-27, in *Culture, Ethnicity and Identity*, edited by William C. McCready (New Delhi: Academic Press, 1983).
13. Abdul Malik Mujahid, *Conversion to Islam: Untouchables' Strategy for Protest*, (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Publications, 1989).
  14. A.G. Noorani, "Indira Gandhi and Indian Muslims", asserts that the late Prime Minister's policy toward Indian Muslims was "cynical and sordid." See *Economic and Political Weekly* (3 November 1990); p. 2419.
  15. *Constituent Assembly Debates* 3 (1949); pp. 484, 486.
  16. A.P. Government Order ("G.O.") No. 43 dated 8 March 1990, according to Kumaraswami Reddi, Principal Secretary Government of Andhra Pradesh, cited in *Newstime* and *Siyasat*, Hyderabad daily newspapers dated 20 October 1990.
  17. Asha Krishnakumar, "Fertility Among Muslims in India Not Due to Religion", *Frontline* (Madras) 12-25 October 1991.
  18. Balraj Puri, "Muslim Personal Law: Questions of Reform and Uniformity be Delinked," *Economic and Political Weekly* 20, no. 23 (8 June 1985); pp. 987-90.
  19. Malkani, op. cit.
  20. Suneet Chopra, "Problems of the Muslim Minority in India", *Social Scientist* 5, no. 2 (September 1976); pp. 67-77.
  21. Malkani, op. cit.
  22. Amnesty International, *Allegations of Extrajudicial Killings by the Provincial Armed Constabulary in and Around Meerut, May 22-23, 1987*, (London: Amnesty International, 1988) A.C. Gupta, *Report of the Indian People's Human Rights Tribunal on the Meerut Riots* (Meerut: IPHRC, 1989).
  23. George E. Simpson, *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination* (New York: Plenum Press, 5th edition, 1985); p. 15.
  24. Mary F. Katzenstein, *Ethnicity and Equality: The Shiv Sena Party and Preferential Policies in Bombay*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979).

25. Except the Muslim and the Leftist press. See, for example, Shams Pirzada, "Shiv Sena and Bombay Muslims", *Radiance* (19 May 1968); p. 11; "Shiv Sena Turns Anti-Muslim", *New Age* (19 October 1969); p. 13.
26. Katzenstein, op. cit., and Dipankar Gupta, *Nativism in a Metropolis: The Shiv Sena in Bombay* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1982).
27. A.G. Noorani, "Vande Mataram: A Historical Lesson", *Economic and Political Weekly* (9 June 1973) pp.1039-43.
28. Cited in Dipankar Gupta, op. cit., p. 150. Joshi became the chief Minister of Maharashtra when his party in alliance with the BJP came to power in early 1995.
29. Thackeray interview with *Probe India* (June 1989); p. 37.
30. *The Hindu* (overseas edition), 28 August 1989; p. 3.
31. Op.cit.
32. Mayank Chhaya, "Shiv Sena Chief is Found Guilty of Corrupt Practices", *India Abroad* (14 April 1989).
33. *The Hindu* (overseas edition) 26 August 1989; p. 3.
34. Kuldip Nayar, "Bidar ka Sabaq", *Siyasat* (Hyderabad) 9 October 1989; p. 4.
35. Milind Palnitkar, "Assassination Comments Hurt Sena", *India Abroad* (14 June 1991); p. 10.
36. Asghar Ali Engineer, *Bombay-Bhiwandi Riots: Analysis and Documentation*, (Bombay:: Institute of Islamic Studies, 1984), and the same author's "Engulfed in Communal Fire", *Economic and Political Weekly* (27 June 1986); pp. 994-97. Syed Iftikhar Ahmed, "Meaning of Shiv Sena Victory", *Radiance* (29 May-4 June 1988); p. 7; M. Rahman, "Aurangabad: A Dangerous Divide", *India Today* (15 June 1988); pp. 25-35.
37. *Time* (International edition) (25 January 1993); p. 43.
38. "Manifesto of Telugu Desham", pp. 104-12, in *Shift in Indian Politics: 1983 Elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka*, edited by George Matthew (New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1984, and on pages 129-38 of the same book see Ratna Naidu's essay, "Symbolic Imagery Used by the Telugu Desam in Andhra Elections, 1983."
39. *India Today* (31 March 1985); p. 14.
40. C.V. Subba Rao, "Story of a Judicial Inquiry", *Economic and Political Weekly* (15 February 1986); pp. 285-86.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-88.
42. *Ibid.*

43. "NTR's US Visit under Cloud", *Statesman*, New Delhi, 1 June 1984; p. 1.
44. Author's personal interview with Muhammad Abdurrahim Qurayshi, then Secretary, now President of the Majlis-i Taamir-i Millat, July 1990.
45. A moderate Muslim like late Mir Abid Ali Khan, editor of *Siyasat* as told the author in Jeddah in February 1990.
46. T.K. Oommen, "Insiders and Outsiders in India: Primordial Collectivism and Cultural Pluralism in Nation Building", *International Sociology* 1 (March 1986); pp. 53-74; see also Ashok Rudra, "The Myth of [Hindu] Tolerance", *Seminar* 67 (March 1965); p. 25.

## Chapter 7

# Muslim Political Strategies

The first principle of democracy is representation in proportion to numbers.

*John Stuart Mill*

Given the difficulty of keeping a balance between autonomy and integration, between a separate identity and national solidarity, how do Muslims seek to obtain their goals of physical security of life and property, fairness in economic opportunities, education, and the status of Urdu language? Two strategies are widely mentioned: one is total withdrawal from the political process as a group, and the other is full participation whether as a group or as individuals. The theory of non-participation was propounded by Maulana Sayyid Abulala Mawdudi (1903-79) of Jamaat-i Islami, an influential Muslim organization in the South Asian subcontinent. On the eve of the Indian independence, shortly before his migration to Pakistan, the Maulana advised Indian Muslims to completely reorient their thinking and politics as

The controversy regarding the proportion of their representation in the legislative bodies, struggle to secure more government jobs, and to preserve and promote material gains as a community will in the future not only be fruitless but harmful also. Fruitless because those who are going to rule in India have already decided to finish off the separate political identity of the Muslims by enforcing joint electorates and by introducing 'merit' as the sole criterion for government em-

ployment. Nothing can stop the decision from being enforced. Persisting in old attitudes would be harmful because the efforts of the Muslims to preserve their rights will only help intensify the communal prejudices of the Hindus more strongly. Hence we should try to create, on a large scale, public opinion among Muslims that they should as a community have nothing to do with the government and its administration, and should assure Hindu nationalism by their attitude that there is no competing Muslim nationalism. This is the only way to remove the extraordinary prejudice the non-Muslim majority has against Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Maulana Maududi's position was supported by the Jamaat-i-Islami and its idealogues until 1985, when the Jamaat revised its policy.<sup>2</sup> While the Jamaat now permits its members to vote under certain conditions, it still does not participate as a group in elections. This policy of non-participation has been successfully pursued by various small but high-profile Muslim business communities, like the Khojas and Bohras based mainly in Gujarat and Maharashtra. They have placed few demands on the government or on the political system and have asked only to be left alone. In any case they have too few votes to sway elections. But the idea of complete withdrawal from politics is rejected by Muslims with a long tradition of participation in, if not domination of, public life in much of North India, Hyderabad, and Kerala.

Many Muslims argue that the distribution of wealth, jobs, and admission to professional schools is largely determined by the political process that each communal group can best improve its share in education and employment by increasing its political power. Group identity can be strengthened, economic advantages can be extracted, and social status improved only through the route of politics. Today, no Muslim group stands, as some did immediately after independence, for complete withdrawal from the political process.

More than 25 years ago, American political scientist, Theodore P. Wright, Jr., asked a general theoretical question as to what are some of the options available to a religious minority in a democratic system such as India's to organize, protect, and

promote its interests and how can a minority do so most effectively? <sup>3</sup> Answering these questions is essential in the case of a widely and thinly dispersed group such as the Indian Muslims, a minority numbering nearly a 100 million according to the 1981 Census.

Since the Indian Muslims are not concentrated in one geographic area, the alternatives of independence, secession, or large-scale migration to or merger with a neighboring state of shared beliefs or internal autonomy are all ruled out. Modern multi-ethnic states such as India tend to incorporate the citizens into state structure individually, to stress individual rather than collective rights and duties with respect to the state. Modern states define individuals as equals in rights and duties and apply impersonal and universalistic principles in regulating relationships within their authoritative arenas. For a multi-ethnic state this generally involves encouraging acculturation to a common or core culture and the promise of assimilation (structural incorporation into any strata of society) to those who do acculturate. An alternative approach, common in preindustrial states, was to make individual incorporation into state collective. In this case the state explicitly recognizes the differences between constituent groups and to some extent define the relationship between a group and the government. In a situation like this neither assimilation nor extensive acculturation is encouraged. The Ottoman millet system is a familiar example of this sort. In the millet system, the minorities were represented by the community elite, which articulated minority interests and received protection in return for cooperation with the government. To be represented to the state, minorities in India have three political choices: (1) they can join one of the parties sympathetic to minorities or secular in orientation, such as the Indian National Congress or the Janata Dal ; (2) they can work through a non-partisan pressure group that would ensure the election of sympathetic individuals regardless of party affiliation; (3) or finally, they can form their own political party and try to extract benefits by holding the



balance of power in a coalition government. Indian Muslims have tried all the three approaches.

### Muslims in the Dominant Political Party and Alliance with Congress

Since the freedom movement, the Indian National Congress (INC) has been in political alliance with Muslims as represented by the Jamiat al-Ulama-yi Hind, a party of the *ulama* associated with the Deoband seminary located in Saharanpur, UP. The Jamiat's cooperation with the Congress has involved a political bargain in which the *ulama* have given their support on the assumption that places of worship, religious endowments, Muslim Personal Law, and other institutions and aspects of Islamic culture would be maintained. The apparent liberalism and secular approach of the Congress leadership toward the Muslims under Jawaharlal Nehru drew to the Congress Muslim politicians of various inclinations. In any case there was no real alternative to the Congress immediately after independence. The once-powerful Muslim League had dissolved except in the old Madras province, and its members had either migrated to Pakistan or retired from politics or joined the Congress, where they were accepted despite the protest of "nationalist" Muslims, that is those Muslims who had opposed the League and the creation of Pakistan.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the Congress Party emerged at the beginning of independence as the natural instrument for the participation of Muslims in the new political process. It was both the dominant party and the one most strongly committed to secularism and to the protection of minorities. Muslim support to the Congress is evident from the number of votes received by Congress candidates in the three general elections 1952, 1957, and 1962 (see table I below).

Table XII

Votes received by Congress Muslim Candidates as a percentage of the total valid votes polled by all Muslim candidates in the elections to the State Legislative Assemblies

State	1952	1957	1962	1962
Bihar	63.62	65.01	51.83	39.02
Uttar Pradesh	72.09	57.97	47.27	35.93
West Bengal	56.10	50.63	51.75	47.11
INDIA	57.12	58.62	52.27	40.44

Source: Gopal Krishna. "Framework of Politics." in *Minority in Crisis*, a symposium published in *Seminar* 106 (June 1968): p. 34.

These elections were held immediately after independence in the three major States of Bihar, UP, and West Bengal, where more than half of the total Muslim population is concentrated. Muslims began to be disenchanted with the Congress Party after the communal riots in 1963. It was perceived as having betrayed the trust of the Muslims despite its dominance in national politics and despite unqualified Muslim support. The Congress Governments were seen as having failed to protect lives and property during riots, as having denied Muslims a fair share in education and in the economy, and as having deprived Urdu of its official status. Barring the exceptional cases of Maulana Abulkalam Azad<sup>5</sup> and a few others (for example, Ziyaurrahman Ansari in the Rajiv Gandhi administration), Congress Muslim leaders lacked self-confidence and mass appeal. Generally speaking, Muslim activists who joined and received party tickets (that is, nomination) to contest elections at the state or national level were seen as symbols of tokenism among the Muslim electorate, not as legitimate representatives of the Muslim community. This was demonstrated in a sensational speech in April 1964 by N. Muhammad Anwar, a Congress member of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of Indian Parliament, who castigated his fellow Congress Muslims as "show boys."<sup>6</sup>

Congress Muslims became so dependent on the system that neither within the councils of the party nor in the legislatures were they able to ventilate the legitimate grievances of fellow Muslims. Most of the Muslims in Congress, it was felt by the Muslim community, were reluctant to identify themselves with the hopes, aspirations, and demands of the Muslim constituents lest they be dubbed communal and be refused party endorsement in the future. This was ironical, because the Congress patently gave nominations to certain Muslims in order to attract Muslim voters, especially from constituencies with a significant number of Muslim votes. After having supported the Congress for over a decade, Muslim politicians began to ask whether the interests of the community could not be better served by building up a more autonomous position for Muslims.

#### **Politics of a Nonpartisan Pressure Group: Mushawarat and the 1967 General Election**

When Congress party dominance in politics waned in 1967, a new strategy was attempted by the Muslim Majlis-i Mushawarat (Muslim Consultative Committee or MMM). Founded in August 1964 during a meeting of Muslim leaders in Lucknow, it represented various schools of thought among Indian Muslims: Nationalist Jamiat al-Ulama-yi Hind, Jamaat-i Islami, Muslim League, and modernists both inside and outside Congress. In 1967, it published a *People's Manifesto* and bargained with political parties and candidates to support it. This strategy failed because it did not take into account the strong discipline exercised by Indian political parties over their legislators who could not defy the party line. After the election, the victorious candidates elected with Majlis support backed out when the time came for implementation of party promises. Like the British, but unlike the American political system where a legislator's loyalty is primarily to the constituents, the Indian system allows the political party to exercise great control over the candidate. One might even say that the chances of MMM strategy succeeding were not there to begin with, given the characteristics of the Indian parliamentary democracy. The

Mushawarat has been dormant since the elections of 1967 despite attempts for its revival by Syed Shahabuddin.<sup>7</sup>

The failure of Mushawarat strategy gave rise to exclusive Muslim political parties such as the Muslim Majlis in UP in 1968 and Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin in Andhra Pradesh, both modelled after and inspired by the success of the Muslim League in Kerala, which made an impressive debut in West Bengal by winning one parliamentary seat and seven State Assembly constituencies in the 1971 elections, but failed to expand thereafter. The League strength in the Kerala Legislature enabled it to hold the balance of power in every coalition government between 1967 and 1987 and again in 1991. The rationale for a separate Muslim political party, according to some, is that "within the context of Islamic political values, it is more important to Muslims to be represented by Muslims than by elected, politically accountable, non-Muslims."<sup>8</sup> This notion stems from an Islamic belief that society is irrevocably divided between Muslims and non-Muslims. From this division it follows that those who are of the group are best qualified to speak for the group in a legislature. In contrast, the British liberal democracy tends to regard representative institutions the repositories of national consensus, which is periodically renewed by elected majorities. The liberal view distinguishes sharply between a representative's political commitments, on the one hand, and his or her religious or cultural affiliation on the other. Indian Muslims have historically adhered to the view that those representing the community must come from within its own ranks and from its own platform. The most efficient method of achieving Muslim representation to the state in a Muslim-minority country like India, according to the Muslim Leaguers, is by separate electorates or by reservation of parliamentary seats in proportion to the Muslim population.

#### **Demand for Separate Electorates or Proportionate Representation**

Separate electorates entail the representation of religious or other minorities by legislators chosen by an electorate composed

only of the members of that minority. The provision and extent of such representation was an extremely troublesome political issue in India during the forty years preceding independence. The Government of India Act of 1909 (also known as the Minto-Morley reforms) gave separate electorates to Muslims, and the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 provide separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and other groups. Proposals to give separate electorates to the Scheduled Castes under the 1935 Act were withdrawn after adamant resistance by Mohandas K. Gandhi.

The problem of the demand for safeguards for communal minorities was not finally resolved by the Constituent Assembly until it had virtually completed the drafting of the entire Constitution in November 1949. In attempting to secure the consent of the minorities, while still satisfying the majority, the Congress Party was confronted with a dilemma. It was clear that if detailed safeguards were included in the Constitution to secure the agreement of the minorities, they would also serve to perpetuate the separate consciousness of the minorities and work against the basic desire of the Congress to strengthen Indian national unity. Yet a complete refusal to grant these demands would have left the Congress open to the charge of having disregarded minority rights and interests, and thereby justified the charges of the Muslim League. As Ivor Jennings, a British Constitutional historian said: "To compromise with communal claims may be the height of statesmanship because it enables the majority to secure the support of the minorities. To recognize communal claims, on the other hand, is to strengthen communalism."<sup>9</sup> Under the terms of the British Cabinet Mission statement of 16, May 1947, the Constituent Assembly's Advisory Committee was to be the principal instrument for securing the just consideration of the minorities problem. The Advisory Committee and its Minority Rights Sub-Committee began work under the chairmanship of H.C. Mookherjee, a Bengali Christian, in July 1947. Sentiment in the Assembly at this time seems to have been in favour of reserving seats for minorities in legislature but strongly against separate electorates. Both

Congressmen and non-Congressmen demanded it for their communities. The Sikhs, including the Akali leader and Union Defence Minister, Baldev Singh, wanted reservations. Homi Modi made a similar demand on behalf of fellow Parsis. The leader of the Congress Untouchables, Jagjivan Ram, together with H. J. Khandekar and B.R. Ambedkar, stood for reservation for the Scheduled Castes. H.C. Mookherjee, the leader of the Indian Christians, himself wanted to forego reservation, although he feared his community would not agree. Under pressure from Sardar Patel, exercised by K.M. Munshi, he ultimately decided to disavow reservation, and became a leader of the movement against it. Among the Muslims, including the nationalist Congress Muslims, as well as the League representatives, there was strong support for reservation. Several voices were even raised in favor of separate electorates, mainly from the Madras Provincial Muslim League leaders.<sup>10</sup> According to Khaliquzzaman, the Untouchables' group led by B.R. Ambedkar promised to support the League leaders' demand for reservations but backed out at the time of voting.<sup>11</sup>

After considering these views and holding prolonged discussions among themselves, the members of the Minorities Sub-Committee rejected separate electorates by 26 votes to 3, and by the same margin accepted the principle of reserved seats for certain minorities—including Muslims—for a ten-year period, after which the question would be reconsidered. The Advisory Committee took up the Sub-Committee's decision at a meeting held on 28 July 1947. Voting on the Sub-Committee's recommendation that separate electorates be ended, only three of the fifty-eight members present opposed abolition. The Committee's report noted that separate electorates had been rejected by "an overwhelming majority" because "this system has in the past sharpened communal differences to a dangerous extent," and has proved one of the "main stumbling blocks to the development of a healthy national life." But to prevent communal minorities from feeling apprehensive, the report continued, seats were to be reserved for them on the basis of their percentage in the general population.

Two years elapsed before the Constituent Assembly took the final decision on the reservation of seats in legislatures for the minorities. In May 1949, the Advisory Committee met to take up H.C. Mookherjee's resolution—for which support, had been solicited during the previous months—that reservations be abolished.<sup>12</sup> What had transpired between August 1947 to May 1949 to warrant a revision of the earlier decision? The incredible violence that accompanied the partition of the country and the violent death of Mohandas K. Gandhi generated a feeling of revulsion toward all aspects of communal politics either of the minority or the majority. In the course of the debate on the resolution, Nehru noted that in the draft Constitution, which was then being circulated, there were "certain definite communal elements." He added, "What the final decision will be about that I cannot say. I hope personally that the less reservation there is the better." Earlier, Nehru had remarked that "with separate electorates ended, most of the 'poison' had gone." Unlike Nehru, who was not a member of the Minorities Sub-Committee, Sardar Patel spoke at a great length on separate electorates and reservation:

There is no place here for those who claim separate representation. I want the consent of this House and the consent of all the minorities to change the course of history. For a community to think that its interests are different from that of the country in which it lives is a great mistake. Assuming that we agreed today to the reservation of seats, I would consider myself to be the greatest enemy of the Muslim community, because of the consequences of that step in a secular and democratic state. Assume that you have separate electorates on a communal basis. Will you ever find a place in any of the Ministries in the provinces or in the Centre? You have a separate interest. Here is a Ministry or a government based on joint responsibility, where people who do not trust us or who do not trust the majority cannot obviously come into the government itself. You will exclude yourself and remain perpetually in a minority. Then, what advantage will you gain? You perhaps think that there will be some third power who will use its influence to put the minority against the

majority and compel the majority to take one or two ministers according to the proportion of the population. It is a wrong idea. That conception in your mind which has worked for many years must be washed off altogether. For the future of a minority it is best to trust the majority. If the majority misbehaves, it will suffer. If I were a member of a minority community, I would forget that I belong to a minority community. Why should not a member of any community be the Prime Minister of this country? Trust us and see what happens. Why are you afraid? Make friends with others and create change in the atmosphere. You will then get more than your quota, if you really feel for the country in the same manner as other people. Now I do not think, so far as the Muslim case is concerned, there is any other point remaining to be answered.<sup>13</sup>

Despite Nehru and Patel's support for Mookherjee's move to abolish reservation, two Madras Muslim Leaguers, M. Muhaimmad Ismail and B. Poker Sahib, stoutly opposed it. They argued that the partition had diminished their numbers and influence and that therefore Muslims needed separate electorates more than before. Abolition of the separate electorates, they argued would result in the "political emasculation" of the Muslims as a *group*. As a thinly and widely dispersed group, Muslims, cannot send their true representatives to the national parliament, the Leaguers contended. Pleading the case for reservation, Muhammad Ismail said:

Sir, I assert and say definitely that the Muslims, as a community, are not for giving up reservation. *Not only that, but they implore this house to retain separate electorates, which alone will give them the right sort of representation in the legislatures.* The Muslim League, which still is the representative organisation of the Muslim community, has more than once within this year not only expressed a definite view in favour of reservation of seats, but has also urged the retention of separate electorates. That is the position as far as the Muslim minority is concerned.<sup>14</sup> (Italics added)

Support for the reservation came from Sayyid Muhammad Saadullah, a former Premier of Assam Province. Apart from these three Muslim members, the rest of the Muslim League



leadership had disintegrated as a result of deaths, defections to the Congress Party, emigration to Pakistan, or retirement from politics. Among the "nationalist" Muslims, Maulana Abulkalam Azad and Maulana Hifzur Rahman preferred to remain silent during the crucial debate. Tajamul Husain, a former Muslim Leaguer from Bihar, strongly supported Mookherjee's proposition. Before the final vote, Patel pressured Begum Qudsiya Izaz Rasul, a Muslim League defector from the United Provinces, to speak in favour of abolition as no one among the Muslims wanted to propose this historic move.

According to K. M. Munshi, a member of the Minorities Sub-Committee, "Begum Rasul [a young Muslim woman, barely 40 at the time]... somehow ... summoned up courage and walked up to the lectern. She pleaded in a very hesitant manner for the abolition of reservation for Muslims. Muslims were an integral part of the nation, and should play their part in the general electorate."<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, on May 11, 1949, the motion of H.C. Mookherjee that there should be no reservation for the minorities except the Scheduled Castes and Tribes was carried by an overwhelming majority of 58 to 3. The Constituent Assembly had a Muslim membership of 31 out of a total of 235. With this historic move, India abolished the statutory basis of separate Muslim political identity and power that was conceded by the colonial power and accepted by the Congress in its Lucknow Pact with the Muslim League in 1916. The Western liberal concept of representation prevailed over the Islamic idea of communal solidarity. It is ironic that, when it came to vote on this historic decision, the representatives from the traditional centers of Muslim power and culture, the United Provinces, Bihar, and Bengal voted for abolition of reservation, whereas the representatives from the periphery of Muslim culture in Madras and Assam opposed it. Deccani Muslims were unrepresented in the Constituent Assembly as Hyderabad at the time was under the rule of an Indian Military Governor.

The Government's opposition to the legislative reservation strikes many Muslims as discriminatory since reservations have been constitutionally granted and extended to the Scheduled

Castes and Tribes year after year even when the basis of that reservation is not ethnicity but economic backwardness. In support of their argument, the Leaguers point out that Muslim membership of Lok Sabha, the lower house of Indian Parliament, had never been more than 7 per cent of the total. Only once in 1980 (see Table 2), it exceeded 8 per cent, whereas it ought to be at least 11 per cent consistently. The dominant political party in the country was able, if it was willing, to increase Muslim membership in the legislatures, as exemplified by the case of Rajya Sabha, the less powerful Upper House of the Indian Parliament. In 1980, for instance, there were 32 Muslims out of a total of 244 (that is, 13 per cent).

Table 13  
Muslim Membership of Lok Sabha

Year	No. of Muslim Members	% of Total Members
1947 @	31	13.10
1952	36	7.21
1957	24	4.74
1962	32	6.27
1967	29	5.68
1971	27	5.18
1977	32	6.03
1980	46	8.50
1984	41	7.60*
1989	33	6.31**
1991	28	5.03

Source: *Muslim India* (April 1983): p. 190, and subsequent issues of the same journal.

@ Represents the Constituent Assembly which had a membership elected through Separate Electorates. Source: Grenville Austin, *The Indian Constitution*, Oxford, 1966, p. 13. The 13.1 per cent Muslim membership represented a slightly higher number than the community's proportion in the national population in 1947.

\* No election in Assam or Panjab.

\*\* No election in Assam

\*\*\* No elections in Kashmir and Panjab.

Although demands are made for proportionate representation through reserved seats or other procedural mechanisms from time to time,<sup>16</sup> at present there is no rational hope of those demands being met. Therefore, Muslim parties aspiring to send members to Parliament must work within the present political system of joint electorates. Proponents of separate Muslim political action argue that the community ought to align itself with other ethnic political parties. Examples of such alliances, though so far largely short-lived and ineffective, are the Republican Party and the Federation of Muslims, Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes in UP, the Bheem Sena founded by B. Shyam Sundar in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in 1960s, the Dalit Muslim Suraksha Mahasangh established by a former smuggler Haji Mastan Mirza in Maharashtra in 1984, and the short-lived Insaf Party of Syed Shahabuddin in 1989. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), an organization of Scheduled Castes and other backward classes has had some success in winning a few parliamentary seats from UP, in the 1989 elections with Muslim support.<sup>17</sup> In the 1993 State election in UP, a coalition of Muslims and lower caste Hindus led by BSP and Mulayam Singh Yadav defeated the BJP, the last incumbent.<sup>18</sup> It is possible that the Muslim-lower caste Hindu alliance may be repeated elsewhere in the country. Apart from UP, to date the only similar alliance that has been successful in wresting political control from the hands of the upper caste Hindus has been KHAM (comprising four groups: Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi, and Muslim), which won control of the government in Gujarat in both 1980 and 1985.<sup>19</sup> But this alliance was created and controlled by the higher caste Hindu members of the Congress.

Complementing the Muslim-Scheduled Castes alliance, Muslim political parties contend that Muslims ought to contest elections on their own in constituencies where Muslim electors are in large numbers in alliance with or independent of the national or regional political parties. So we turn to the question of what factors make it possible for Muslims to be elected to Lok Sabha, with a case study in Hyderabad, AP.

### **Factors in Muslim Electability to Lok Sabha**

The Lok Sabha, or the lower house of the Indian parliament is the most powerful legislative body in the country. The government rests on the confidence of the Lok Sabha, and the Council of Ministers is responsible only to it. A vote of "no confidence" in Lok Sabha, if passed, can bring down a government as happened in November 1990. The Lok Sabha has 544 members. Of these, all but two are directly elected. In addition, the President can nominate no more than two representatives of the Anglo-Indian community, if none have been elected. Of the 542, there are as many as 116 "reserved seats" for which only members of the Scheduled Castes or Tribes may contest, although voting is not restricted to anyone in a reserved seat constituency. Approximately 21 per cent of the total, reserved seats guarantee Scheduled Castes and Tribes' representation. Similar safeguards, available to Muslims during the colonial period, were abolished, as we have seen in 1950, shortly after independence. As no significant Muslim group is included among the Scheduled Castes or Tribes, Muslims cannot stand for election to reserved seats, though they can theoretically be elected to any of the 426 "open" seats.

### **Selection of Candidates.**

By and large, the selection of candidates for legislatures is made by political parties, including the Communist Parties on the basis of the caste and communal composition of the constituency; a necessity, given the rules of the game of electoral politics. Each political party tries to ensure the solid support of a particular caste or community, or occasionally a group of castes and communities, and puts up a few independent "dummy" candidates as vote splitters. The selection of candidates on the basis of caste and community is helped by the absence of sharply drawn ideological lines between the various political parties. In constituencies where no caste or community is dominant, a candidate is selected from the smallest caste in order to

neutralize the caste factor. Muslims, like the Scheduled Castes but unlike the Scheduled Tribes, are dispersed in several constituencies. Precise data about the number of constituencies where Muslims represent a large number of voters are difficult to come by because census tracts do not coincide with constituencies. Most political scientists agree that there are ten constituencies in which Muslims have at least a simple majority, and at least another ten in which they are 35 to 49 per cent, and an imprecise number where they are 20 to 34 per cent.<sup>20</sup> see Map III, and Tables 3a -b, which show Muslim percentages in 20 constituencies.

**Table XIVa**  
**Lok Sabha Constituencies With 50 % or More Muslim Voters**

<i>State</i>	<i>Name of Constituency</i>	<i>Muslim %</i>
Bengal	Berhampur	55.90
	Jangipur	55.27
	Murshidabad	55.19
Kashmir	Anantnag	95.40
	Baramula	97.30
	Srinagar	90.60
Kerala	Ponani	60.10
	Manjeri	60.90
	Calicut	51.50
Lakshadweep	Lakshadweep	98.00

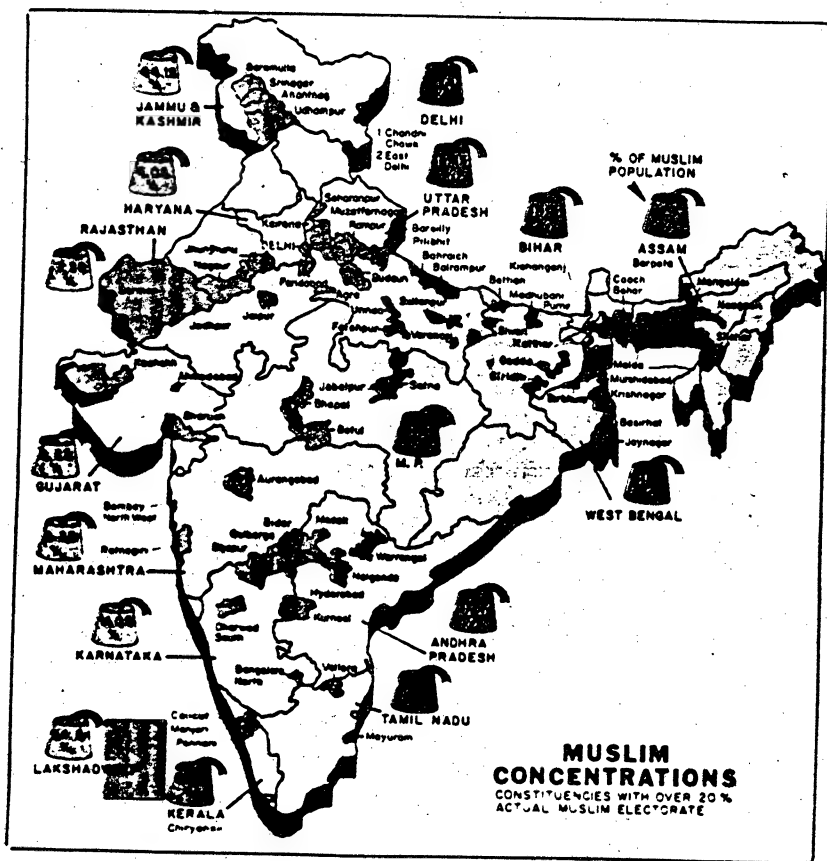


Table XVIb  
Lok Sabha Constituencies With 35%-49 % or More Muslim Voters

<i>State</i>	<i>Name of Constituency</i>	<i>Muslim %</i>
Uttar Pradesh	Rampur	45.00
	Moradabad	42.00
	Amroha	37.03
Bihar	Kishanganj	37.07
	Katihar	39.00
Bengal	Raiganj	39.04
	Malda	43.00
Assam	Dhubri	43.40
	Silchar	39.10
Andhra	Hyderabad	38.00

Source: Various election studies cited in the bibliography below.

It is of course relatively easy for Muslim candidates to get elected from a constituency in which their coreligionists are in a majority. But where they are not, ideally the exclusively Muslim political parties try to contest elections in alliance with a major national or regional political party willing to support candidates of Muslim parties in constituencies where Muslims represent 30 per cent or more of the population. Since Muslim votes alone will not swing the election in their favour, non-Muslim votes are then delivered to Muslim parties in exchange for a quid pro quo elsewhere. This strategy was successfully used in Uttar Pradesh in the 1977 parliamentary elections, when three members of the Muslim Majlis were elected to Lok Sabha with the support of Bharatya Lok Dal, a party controlled by a former Chief Minister Chaudhuri Charan Singh.<sup>21</sup> In constituencies where Muslim voters represent 35 per cent or more of the population and electoral fights are at least triangular, the Muslims by voting *en bloc* and voting significantly higher than national average would ensure the election of the Muslim party candidates. This strategy

has the greatest chance of success where the tri or multi-cornered election involves two national or regional parties entering the contests. A successful example of this strategy can be found in Hyderabad, a largely urban parliamentary constituency in south-central India, which sent Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, President of the Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin to the Parliament thrice—in 1984, 1989, and 1991.

### Hyderabad Constituency: An Overview

Located in the district of the same name and in the adjacent Rangareddy district, the Hyderabad parliamentary constituency comprises seven Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly constituencies, four of which (Charminar, Chandrayangutta, Karwan, and Yaqutpura) are urban and situated in the old city of Hyderabad, and three (Chevalla, Vikarabad, and Tandur) are semi-urban. In terms of the social composition of the constituency, Hindus comprise 59.4 per cent, Muslims 37.6 per cent, and the rest 2.1 per cent of the total urban part of the constituency in 1981. In the semi-urban part, the social composition is as follows: Hindus 75 per cent, Muslims 11 per cent, and the rest 14 per cent.<sup>22</sup>

The Hyderabad district, including the State capital, is an educational and cultural centre. It is at the top in the state in educational level, with 45 per cent literacy. Four universities, three medical and engineering colleges, several scientific and defence laboratories and institutes add to the importance of the area. Industrial development in the district for the last four decades has made the region the center of economic activity in the state.

Reflecting the general pattern of Congress Party dominance in Andhra Pradesh, the Hyderabad constituency consistently elected a Congress MP from the first general elections in 1952. upto 1984. <sup>23</sup> Up to 1983 the Opposition was, by and large, weak and fragmented so that the Congress had no effective challenge in the state. In 1983 the Telugu Desam, a regional party came out victorious in the state election ending decades of Congress rule. The following year saw the eighth general election for Lok Sabha



in the country, and, for the first time, a candidate of the local Muslim political party, the Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin, was elected to Parliament benefiting from the split in majority Hindu votes which were divided between the two major parties, namely, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Indian National Congress (INC). How was the Majlis able to win the seat in 1984 and 1989 and not earlier? An explanation lies in the political dynamics in the State and in the working of the Majlis strategy in Andhra Pradesh (AP) politics.

#### **Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin in A.P. Politics.**

Founded in 1927 as a federation of the representatives of Muslim sects and communities, the Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin (MIM, or the Council of Muslim Unity) is the most important Muslim organization in Hyderabad city. Between 1948 and 1957, it remained dormant as a result of the changed political situation in the erstwhile Hyderabad State after its incorporation in India one year after independence.<sup>24</sup>

Revived in 1957, shortly after the states' reorganization, the Majlis aims to represent the interests of the Muslim community in the local bodies, the state Legislative Assembly, and the national Parliament. According to its President Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi:

Muslim withdrawal from politics would be an irresponsible and undemocratic decision. No aspect of life is free from the impact of politics. No one holding power would listen to you unless you can back up your arguments with political muscle. Muslims must have a political platform of their own. Unless Muslims organize politically, help elect or defeat electoral candidates sympathetic to or opposed to their interests, the Muslim community will be rendered politically orphan.<sup>25</sup>

The Majlis entered the electoral arena for the first time in the 1960 Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) elections, winning an impressive 19 seats out of 30 contested from a total of 66 seats. Seven years later in 1967, it sent three members to the state Assembly and has since increased its strength in successive state elections. The 1986 municipal elections results in Hyderabad were notable for the MIM's spectacular victory,

making it the single largest party in MCH.<sup>26</sup> What concrete benefits have accrued to the Muslim community whom the MIM claims to represent?

The Majlis spokesmen claim that it has extracted substantial benefits for the community, particularly in the 1980s. Examples frequently cited are the AP State Minorities Commission, the AP State Minorities Finance Corporation, the AP State Urdu Academy, the Society for Employment and Training in Twin Cities (SETWIN), and the creation of Quli-Qutb Shah Urban Development Authority for the old city, largely inhabited by Muslims. On its own, the leaders of the Majlis take pride in having established the Deccan Medical and Engineering Colleges, an urban cooperative bank, an industrial training institute (ITI), besides regularly helping victims of communal violence for the last two decades. Having gained some respect even among the Muslim middle classes that used to shun it as a party of fanatical rabble rousers, the Majlis entered the 1984 parliamentary elections with the clear intention of winning. In earlier parliamentary elections the Majlis role in the Hyderabad constituency had taken several forms: half-hearted participation in 1967, or support to an independent candidate Badruddin Tayyibji, a former Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University in 1971, and negative participation in 1977 and 1980 elections to prevent election of rival leaders from the old city. With the rise of the Telugu Desham Party in Andhra Pradesh politics, an opportunity arose for the first time when the Congress Party's domination was seriously challenged by the TDP. According to the activists of the local units of the Indian National Congress, the Telugu Desham Party, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the following strategy was pursued by the Majlis candidate.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Majlis Strategy**

Through a thorough use of electoral rolls (that is, a list of voters), the Majlis was able to identify Muslim voters in all seven Assembly constituencies collectively comprising the parliamentary constituency of Hyderabad. The numbers turned out to be approximately 35 per cent of the total.

Given the massive popularity of TDP leader, N.T. Ramarao, as demonstrated in the 1983 State elections, a TDP candidate was expected to put up a strong fight in every parliamentary contest in the state, something lacking in all previous elections. In Hyderabad, this could, the Majlis calculated, result in a split among the Hindu voters between the candidates of the INC and the TDP, paving the way for a Majlis victory.

The Majlis expected Muslims to vote *en bloc*, particularly if the community was convinced that its votes would not be "wasted" and that a strong contest between the Telugu Desam Party and the Indian National Congress provided a reasonable chance of victory to a third party.

Once the word spread that a Muslim candidate was likely to win in a tri- (or multi-) cornered contest, the community could then be mobilized in a manner that would ensure higher than national average Muslim voting. These four factors that would permit election of a candidate of a Muslim party from constituencies with at least 35 per cent Muslim voters.<sup>27</sup>

A close examination of the electoral process in three contests, 1984, 1989, and 1991, reveals a laboratory-like situation obtaining in Hyderabad. In the 1984 election, the Majlis candidate faced two strong adversaries in V. Hanumantha Rao of INC and K. Prabhakar Reddy of the TDP. Both candidates acknowledged concentrating their campaigns on the semi-urban portion of the constituency. Neither spoke Urdu fluently enough to address public gatherings in the urban section of the constituency, so that the two candidates were at a disadvantage from the beginning in the old city where Urdu is widely spoken. In addition, the Congress had lost many Muslim leaders over a period of time as a result of retirement or death. Younger or newer Congress Muslim activists were not forthcoming, thus rendering party campaigning difficult in Muslim areas. The TDP started out as a total stranger to the Muslims, since its leadership came mainly from the Telugu-speaking rural elite of the state. The Majlis candidate was similarly handicapped in rural areas, but then his entire focus was on Muslim votes. Much the same set of candidates was fielded in the 1989 elections by the INC in

Lakshma Reddy and T. Krishna Reddy of TDP, both of them from rural backgrounds and having little contact with or knowledge of Muslim constituents. In 1991, Owaisi faced a similar set of candidates, except for the BJP candidate, Baddam Bal Reddi, the BJP member of the A.P. Assembly from Karwan, a segment of the Hyderabad parliamentary constituency in the old city. Baddam Bal Reddi is also a familiar figure in the old city politics.

The 1991 election was held in an extremely charged atmosphere created by the BJP President, L.K. Advani's bloody *Rathiyatra* (Hindu chariot procession) that killed over 300 Muslims in December 1990 in Hyderabad. Inflammatory speeches by Sadhvi (female priest) Rithambara in May 1991 added to the tense atmosphere. The other two opponents of Owaisi were P. Indra Reddi, a former Minister and TDP MLA, and Shiv Shankar Gowd, an obscure merchant, who contested on the INC ticket. Both lost deposits, but split off enough Hindu votes to enable Owaisi to win the seat a third time. Unlike the candidates of the national or regional parties, Owaisi has been a known figure in Hyderabad politics for well over three decades and in 1984 had briefly served as the Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly as one of the most senior member of the State Legislature. In addition, Owaisi is considered by many to be an articulate speaker in Urdu, the language most popular in urban Hyderabad. During the campaigns, the Majlis candidate launched a full-scale attack on the alleged failures of the Congress Government both at the Centre and in the State, to which the Congress candidate countered with a long list of achievements. Low-key campaigning by the national parties in Muslim areas and the complete absence of TDP advertising in Urdu press or other means of publicity confirm the impression that the TDP had more or less written-off Muslim votes from the beginning.<sup>28</sup> The table noted below indicates a close correspondence between the total Muslim vote and the actual votes received by the Majlis. One can technically argue that Majlis votes are not necessarily Muslim votes. But even allowing for some Scheduled Caste voting for the Majlis candidate, it is

difficult to believe that a significant number of Hindus would vote for a party like the MIM. The Majlis' role in pre-1948 politics in the old Hyderabad State is an anathema to most Hindus, who associate it with the attempts of the Nizam to remain independent of India. Therefore, it is unlikely that many Hindus would vote for the MIM.

Table XVa.  
Votes Secured by the Majlis in 1984

Assembly Segment	Valid Votes	No. of Majlis Votes	% of Muslim Votes	% of Majlis Votes
Tandur	73,390	06,850	11	09.3
Vikarabad	71,406	06,029	11	08.44
Chevalla	85,656	05,391	11	06.29
Karwan	78,304	33,507	52	42.79
Yakutpura	81,922	60,723	70	74.12
Chandrayan	98,573	49,760	50	50.48
Charminar	93,371	59,910	60	64.16

Percentage of valid votes 68.83 percent.

Table XVb.  
Votes Secured by the Majlis in 1989

Assembly Segment	Valid Votes	No. of Majlis Votes	% of Muslim Votes	% of Majlis Votes
Tandur	134,859	9,849	11	7.30
Vikarabad	087,614	6,959	11	7.94
Chevalla	110,651	6,161	11	5.57
Karwan	160,344	69,522	52	43.36
Yakutpura	115,668	82,924	70	71.68
Chandrayan	171,084	116,587	50	68.15
Charminar	143,774	108,365	60	75.37

Percentage of valid votes 74.97 per cent. The difference in the number of voters in 1984 and 1989 is explained by the lowering of voter age in 1989.

*Source:* Number of valid votes, number and percentage of Majlis votes secured are supplied by the Election Section of the General Administration Department, Andhra Pradesh State Secretariat in 1990. Percentage of Muslim voters in each constituency is based on estimates from voters' list derived by the Majlis.

Opinions and data regarding Muslim voting behaviour are mixed. It is argued, for instance, that Muslims do not vote *en bloc*. Muslims vote, it is claimed, according to the situation prevailing in a given constituency and generalizations are, therefore, hazardous. In support of this argument some scholars contend that Muslim society is also fragmented like the other societies on sectarian grounds (Sunni, Shia, Ahl-i Hadith), by language (Urdu speakers, Bengalis), and by other forms of stratification. However, it is frequently forgotten that Urdu-speaking Sunni Muslims form the majority of Indian Muslims and an *overwhelming* majority of Muslims in North India and in the Deccan States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, as the covariance between the Urdu-speaking population and the Muslim population suggests.<sup>29</sup> Besides, in this particular case at least, the Majlis began as and remains a federation of Muslim sects and communities, and unlike other Muslim organizations takes pride in having a sizable number of non-Sunnis in its membership.

Economic deprivation, educational backwardness, and frequency of communal riots combined with real or perceived threats to Muslim identity lead Muslims to vote *en bloc*, especially in places with a long tradition of Muslim dominance in public life. It is frequently feared that large-scale Muslim mobilization could lead to a counter mobilization and consolidation of Hindu voters. The failure of the BJP to make inroads in the old city during municipal and state elections in the 1980s suggests that the "Hindu backlash" theory has not fully worked in Hyderabad at least. This is evidenced by the split in Hindu votes in even the communally charged atmosphere of 1991 election. Unlike Muslims, the Hindus are far less homogeneous, divided as they are along caste, subcaste, and linguistic lines. According to Ale Narendra, a BJP leader, "the Hindus have not supported or voted BJP in the same manner as have Muslims for the Majlis."<sup>30</sup> Both the INC and the TDP fielded dummy Muslim candidates in order to split Muslim votes during the three elections. On all three occasions, however, the dummy Muslim candidates were obscure nonentities who

forfeited election deposit money as they failed to secure the bare minimum.

As Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph have reported, Muslim voters tend to favour confessional parties where Muslims are in significant numbers, and vote for national parties when in a smaller minority.<sup>31</sup> In Hyderabad during the parliamentary elections of 1984, 1989, and 1991 as well as in the state elections of 1985, polling was significantly higher in predominantly Muslim constituencies compared to other constituencies in the city. Muslim boys, even below the voting age, seem to have voted in large number, particularly in the 1984 election.<sup>32</sup> Polling was around 90 per cent, and over 90 per cent went in favour of the MIM in the four old city segments of the constituency that have high Muslim concentration in the 1991 election, which prompted the Election Commission to delay the announcement of the election result for several days. One may find confirmation of the widely held belief that minorities universally find democracy protective of their interests in the phenomenon of higher than average Muslim voting. Journalists, political activists, and members of other Muslim organizations testify that high Muslim voting can be attributed to a belief that in certain electoral contests, if chances of a Muslim getting elected are perceived as high, the Muslim masses can then be mobilized on a scale not normally possible, because they are then convinced that something important is at stake.

In a constituency where Muslims are less than 35 per cent, however, voting is lower than or equal to the national average, because Muslims feel ineffectual as a deciding factor. This theory is confirmed by a glance at the voting per centage in the neighboring constituency of Secunderabad, which has approximately 16 per cent of Muslim voters. In Asafnagar, a predominantly Muslim segment of Secunderabad constituency, Muslim voting is about the State average, indicating a lack of special enthusiasm on the part of Muslim voter. (see Table 5). A comparison of percentages of valid votes in tables 4 and 5 confirms the hypothesis that Muslims are likely to vote higher than the national average in constituencies where Muslims feel

there is something at stake and vote at the same rate as other groups in constituencies where stakes are seen as ordinary. According to the journalists present during the polling dates in 1984, 1989, and 1991, the Majlis sympathizers among the large number of rickshaw pullers and auto rickshaw drivers transported voters to the booths without charge to such an extent that few vehicles were available for hire during the polling hours. The Urdu press, usually very well informed about socio-political currents in the city, reported unusual enthusiasm among Muslim youth for voting. The enthusiasm took many forms, free canvassing work for the Majlis, distribution of election-related literature, posting of signs and pictures depicting the party symbol, and the like. According to the INC and TDP leaders, both rivals of each other as well as of the Majlis, neither of the party had polling agents in as many as 500 polling stations out of a total of 986 in the entire constituency, leaving the ballot boxes in the hands of the Majlis agents. The Majlis was successful in the two elections mainly due to a well-thought-out strategy coupled with the massive support it received from the Muslim community.

Table 16  
Polling Percentage in Asafnagar

Year	Total Votes	Valid Votes	Muslim Voters' %	% of Valid Vote
1984	107,138	57,665	58	53.82
1989	130,024	64,011	58	49.23

Source: Muslim voter percentage estimated by the Majlis, the rest supplied by the Election Section, General Administration Department, Andhra Pradesh State Secretariat.

Pondering over the defeat of the TDP in the 1989 elections, Mirza Ansar Baig, a former civil servant and the best-known Muslim in the Telugu Desam, identified several reasons for the minorities rejection of his party, among them being (1) failure to



give Urdu its rightful status in Andhra Pradesh; (2) restrictions on minority educational institutions, particularly the medical and engineering schools established by the Majlis; and, finally, (3) failure of the TDP to put up a single Muslim candidate either for the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha from anywhere in the State. Since then, however, a Muslim candidate Syed Laljan Pasha, won the party ticket in 1991 from the Guntur constituency.<sup>33</sup> To Mirza Ansar Baig's list can be added the TDP MPs vote against the Muslim Women's Bill of 1987 in Lok Sabha, the interception of mail to and from five Muslim organizations, failure to associate the government with the 400th anniversary celebration of Hyderabad's foundation, as well as the bloody communal riots in the State during the TDP rule. It is really significant that on the two occasions (January 1983 and March 1985), when the TDP leader N.T. Ramarao took the oath of office as Chief Minister, the old city was under curfew as a result of communal clashes. It is ironic that as the Telugu Desam took office in AP, the first victim of communal violence under the TDP Government was a Muslim Telugu poet Ghulam Yasin, who was murdered by religious fanatics. Indeed, improving communal relations was considered by Muslims as the priority for the new government at an exit poll conducted for the first time in the country by *India Today*.<sup>34</sup>

Is the Majlis strategy applicable elsewhere in India? The MIM leaders think so. According to Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, a Muslim party can win at least 10 constituencies (see Table 3) if it follows the strategy so successfully employed in the last three parliamentary elections in Hyderabad. According to Owaisi, Muslim parties, particularly in the north, have been short lived. The individuals associated with them have not worked hard enough to produce results, thus wasting away Muslim votes among various parties. In North India, cases where candidates of Muslim pressure groups or parties have been successful come from elections during which exclusively Muslim parties contested from the platform of a mainstream political party. A good example is the election of three Muslim Majlis candidates who ran on the Bharatya Lok Dal tickets in Moradabad,

Bulandshahar, and Sultanpur in UP in the 1977 election. In this situation, sharp polarization between Hindu and Muslim voters did not take place as the Majlis and the Jana Sangh leaders campaigned for each other's candidates under the banner of the Janata Party, an umbrella organization for various Opposition parties. Similarly, a Muslim candidate has consistently been elected since 1957 from the Kishanganj constituency in the district Purnea, Bihar, either on the Congress or Janata tickets, except in the 1967 election. Similar examples can be cited from states as diverse as West Bengal and Assam. A Muslim candidate has been elected to the Lok Sabha since 1980 from Malda in West Bengal, and from Raiganj in the same state during elections in 1977, 1980; and 1984. The Dhubri constituency in Assam has elected a Muslim candidate without fail since the first election of 1952. Surprisingly, the Silchar constituency, despite 39.1 per cent Muslim electors, did not elect a Muslim in any of the elections, although from the neighboring Barpeta constituency (in the district of Kamrup) a Muslim candidate has been consistently elected since 1962.<sup>35</sup> In none of the instances was an exclusively Muslim party involved and, therefore, elections were not socially divisive along Hindu-Muslim lines and did not generate communal tensions or trigger riots.

The most well-known example of an exclusive Muslim party's success in elections is that of the Muslim League in Kerala. The reason why the Kerala case is not as easily replicated elsewhere (with the possible exception of West Bengal) can be sought in the history of Hindu-Muslim relations in Kerala; and Muslim population demography in the state and, above all, in the political dynamics obtaining in the state that differ from the situation elsewhere in India. First, Islam came to Malabar peacefully as compared to its advent in northern and eastern India. Arab traders propagated their faith by persuasion and example rather than by conquest or force. Secondly, Moplah Muslims are in a majority in at least one district, which provides the League with a permanently safe base. Moplah Muslims are also well-integrated in the local society, as they speak Malayalam, the language of the region, rather than a different

one, as is the case in Northern India and the Deccan. Thirdly, unlike other parts of the country, Kerala has no tradition of Muslim rule, as is the case with virtually all other parts of the country. The absence of Muslim rule has contributed to relatively harmonious communal relations, excepting only the eighteenth century invasion of Malabar by Tipu Sultan, and the Moplah rebellion of 1921. Moreover, the various ethno-religious groups are evenly balanced in the State.

In terms of the political dynamics, Kerala has had no single-party dominance since the 1960s, which has allowed the minority political parties to play the role of a balance holder. Unlike other states, the political culture in Kerala permits the existence of parties based on a single community, as exemplified by the cases of the Kerala Congress (representing the Christians) and the Muslim League. In 1972, Mrs. Indira Gandhi publicly called the League a non-communal organization, which has been in one political alliance or another since 1959. Muslim League candidates in Kerala run for Parliament invariably as candidates of a coalition and thus prevent sharp communal cleavage. Closely contested elections involving a Muslim political party or an independent Muslim candidate without the advantage of an alliance with a mainstream party can cause—and have caused—deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations in a number of instances. Shabih Ahmad reports the case in Moradabad, UP, in the 1971 parliamentary election where Shamim Ahmad ran as an independent Muslim candidate banking exclusively on Muslim votes, triggering a counter mobilization by the Hindu right-wing Jana Sangh that resulted in communal violence.<sup>36</sup> A similar closely contested election to the AP. Legislative Assembly in 1967 along Hindu-Muslim lines sparked off a riot in Nizamabad. The 1980 parliamentary election in Hyderabad involving a BJP candidate in the Hyderabad constituency left five people dead and 62 injured. The prospects of elections to the municipal corporation in July 1981 led to riots in which thirty people were killed and 90 injured. During the AP State Assembly elections in January 1983, 11 people were killed and 74 injured. In the 1985

elections, nine people died and scores injured. Such examples can be multiplied.<sup>37</sup>

In the specific context of Hyderabad, local Congress leaders attributed the failure of their party to the absence of Muslims in the City Congress Committee. According to V. Hanumantha Rao, the Congress candidate for Lok Sabha in the 1984 elections, Muslims in his party prefer to run in constituencies that have a small-Muslim population. They feel they are no match to Majlis candidates and what they call the Majlis' vitriolic campaign tactics. On all three occasions, 1984, 1989, and 1991 elections, the Congress had no Muslim MLA elected from any constituency in the twin cities. The lack of Congress Muslims with strong roots in the community was dramatically illustrated by a remark of J. Vengala Rao, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. While inaugurating a Majlis-sponsored industrial training institute, he publicly called the MIM the representative Muslim organization, to the great embarrassment of Congress Muslims.<sup>38</sup>

An alternative strategy for Muslim representation is seen in the Congress policy of giving the ticket to a Muslim candidate in constituencies where non-Muslim voters predominate as the table below indicates. In none of the constituencies are Muslims more than 16 per cent of the total electorate, thus eliminating caste factor from becoming salient in voter choice. Congress Muslims get elected from these constituencies on the basis of party support and not as "Muslim" candidates banking on the solidarity of their coreligionists alone. Unable to get a Muslim elected from the Hyderabad constituency due to stiff competition from the Majlis and the Jana Sangh/BJP, the Congress Muslims contest run in rural constituencies where the party hold has been strong and the communal factor inoperative. The Congress Party has derived its strength until 1984, at least, from accommodating as many groups as possible. In a state divided sharply along regional lines (Andhra, Rayalasima, and Telengana), and along caste lines such as the Kammas and the Reddis, and with a large population of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Tribes—the Congress's task of balancing conflicting demands is particularly difficult. In a study of the

social background of the Lok Sabha members from Andhra Pradesh, Ram Reddy reported that "both at the state and national levels the relative advantage of the upper castes has been declining and that of the Backward Classes has been increasing."<sup>39</sup> The Muslims have similarly declined. In the elections of 1957 and 1962, the Congress Party was able to get three Muslims elected, but since then only one has been elected on the Congress ticket and none in 1984. The rise of the TDP has not compensated the Muslim losses that resulted from the Congress decline. The inability of the national parties to provide more than one or two Muslim candidates and the incapability of a pressure group to win more than a handful of parliamentary seats demonstrate the limits of accommodation of collective interests through the political approach.

Table XVIII  
Congress Muslim MPs from AP

Constituency	Election Year	Elected MP
Secunderabad	1957	Ahmad Mohiuddin
	1962	Baqir Ali Mirza
Warangal	1957	Saadat Ali Khan
		Baqir Ali Mirza
	1962	M.M. Hashim
	1967	M.M. Hashim
	1971	M.M. Hashim
Hanamkonda	1980	Kamaluddin Ahmad
	1984	Kamaluddin Ahmad
	1989	Kamaluddin Ahmad
Kurnool	1957	O.A. Khan
Anantapur	1962	O.A. Khan
Guntur	1991	Laljan Pasha (TDP)

Source: *A Compendium of Indian Elections*, compiled by David Butler, Ashok Lahiri, and Pranjoy Roy, (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1984); and newspaper reports.

### Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from the little-known strategy of a minor political party in India? First, one must admit what majority nationalists everywhere deny: that religious minorities in any country have some particular interests upon which the state may impinge. In a pluralistic democracy it must be legitimate for the members of a faith to organize for the protection of those interests against encroachment and to obtain equal treatment, so long as that activity does not subvert the state. Whether the most effective organization for these purposes is a political party is another matter and depends very much on the local political configuration.

Unlike ideological and nationalist parties, parties based exclusively on a minority community are inherently incapable of mobilizing a majority. Therefore, a religious minority party's only hopes of sharing power are by alliance with other small parties or with a major party, a situation that does not always or permanently obtain. J. A. Laponce, a Canadian political scientist, who has extensively studied methods for protecting minorities, has warned of the dangers of a backlash if the minority pressure group is seen to be successful.<sup>40</sup> Getting a handful of Muslim MPs into Parliament this way has its political and social costs, as the success of Muslim party candidates from closely contested seats is likely to create tensions among citizens of different faiths and set in motion the process of ethnic polarization and backlash. What use is it then for a handful of Muslim members to raise issues in a manner likely only to antagonize the majority members? The Muslim Leaguers and the Majlis leaders reply that there is need for "true and independent Muslim spokesmen", rather than of immediate efficacy.<sup>41</sup> It is possible that a small but vociferous minority can sometimes prod or shame an indifferent majority into remedial action on minority rights, although this is apt to be more effective when the appeal is to universal values shared by the majority under conditions of a growing economy. Some Muslims believe that these independent MPs will be able to bring the "world public

opinion" to bear upon the Indian state to ameliorate the minority situation in India. Then too, even if the outraged protest from within the country brings no response, it may have cathartic value for the minority who want to hear their indignant sentiments voiced in the legislatures regardless of the consequences. Quite apart from the ineffectiveness of a Muslim pressure group, some Hindu leaders demand that the existing Muslim population strongholds be split-up in order to prevent consolidation of minority votes. The Andhra Pradesh BJP leader Ale Narendra and Jagmohan, the controversial Vice-Chairman of the Delhi Development Authority, are on record as having asked for a dispersal of Muslim populations to prevent future "Pakistans" in India <sup>42</sup>

Along similar lines, Justice M. Krishna Rao, a retired judge of Andhra Pradesh High Court recommended to the government that "voter constituencies for the purpose of Parliament, the state assembly or other local bodies should be thoroughly and radically changed. The old city should be split up into three or four zones and each zone mixed up along with one or other areas of the new city, i.e. to the North of Moosi [river] This measure would secure permanent benefit ... for all communities living in Hyderabad." <sup>43</sup> Indeed, the A.P. Government itself has gerrymandered the municipal corporation of Hyderabad in 1964 in a manner designed to divide Muslim strongholds and to minimize Muslim dominated constituencies. <sup>44</sup> Attempts at broader alliance of Muslims with the Scheduled Castes are blocked by social distance, by a lack of a sense of corporateness among the Scheduled Castes, sometimes by conflict of economic interest, and above all, by the ability of the dominant political party to buy off Harijan leaders and retain the former Untouchables' loyalty through patronage. The effort to influence public policy and decision through a nonpartisan pressure group failed on account of the strong party discipline precluding extra-party considerations. Some Muslims are enamored of seeking safe seats through proportionate reservation in legislatures. Given the large-scale disapproval of reservations for other Backward Classes expressed throughout the country in summer 1990, it is unlikely

that any government in New Delhi can initiate reservation for Muslims, however justified it may seem.

Muslim effectiveness in the national Parliament could be achieved through an increase in the membership of Lok Sabha of MPs directly elected by Muslims. This is impossible under the present system of representation of joint electorates. Alternative ways of representation such as proportional representation of votes polled by parties, in which case hitherto pressure groups can become major players in national politics, or the redistricting of constituencies to create Muslim-dominated seats, or finally by the revival of separate electorates can drastically increase Muslim political power. The absolute necessity of introducing reservation, (not separate electorates) is tellingly confirmed by the experience of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) since independence. An American scholar, Marc Gallanter, has conclusively demonstrated that very few SCs have been elected to Lok Sabha and state legislatures from "open" non-reserved constituencies. The SC MPs can make it to the Lok Sabha and state legislatures only through reservation, the moment it is withdrawn, their number will immediately go down drastically<sup>45</sup>, because the Scheduled Castes' population is thinly scattered throughout the country preventing the formation of SC majority constituencies, as is the case with Muslims. A similar desire to boost Afro-Americans' membership in North Carolina (where 18 per cent blacks have 12 per cent as members of the State legislature) led to the artificial creation of two black-majority congressional districts, but the US Supreme Court questioned the move as racial gerrymandering<sup>46</sup> which goes to show that Afro-American, like the Indian Muslims, a dispersed minority prefer to be represented by members of their own racial group.

A promising alternative to a majoritarian system may be "consociational" democracy. This model, as political scientist Arend Lijphart<sup>47</sup> describes it, has four major components. First and most important is "government by a grand coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society. Second is the "mutual veto", which serves as an "additional protection of vital minority interests. Third is "proportionality"



as the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds. And fourth is a "high degree of autonomy for each segment to run its own affairs." A similar approach is suggested by a scholar familiar with the Lebanese politics, which ensures representation to all the components of ethno-linguistic or religiously divided or diverse societies.<sup>48</sup>

Countries such as Austria, Switzerland, and Columbia have had successes with this model, while others such as Cyprus and Lebanon have met with failure, largely because of a lack of flexibility in the systems to keep up with the changing population numbers. The Indians could learn from the experiences of these states and modify some elements of the model, especially the principle of mutual veto, to ensure its success for them.

Despite the limitations of a pressure group, the MIM approach is not likely to be abandoned. What Muslims can perhaps do in the interim is to distribute their votes among parties that are secular and democratic in orientation, and thus reduce the exacerbation of societal tensions that characterize closely contested electoral contests that turn into Hindu-Muslim communal fights. Individual Muslim MPs of the mainstream parties will continue to be ineffective even when elected with a sizable portion of Muslim votes. But the Muslim MPs belonging to pressure group are likely to be ineffective in addition to generating communal tension.

#### Notes

1. Maulana Sayyid Abulala Mawdudi, *Hindustan main Muslim Aqaliyat ka Mustaqbal* (Pathankot, 1947); p. 4. My translation from Urdu into English which is the Maulana's speech in Madras delivered at the Jamaat meeting on 25 April 1947 reproduced in *Tahrir-i Islami ke Pachas Sal*, being a special issue of the Jamaat-i Islami's *Dawat* (November 1991); pp. 33-34.
2. See Maulana Abullays Islahi Nadawi, President of the Jamaat-i Islami's writings such as *Election aur Musalman* (Delhi: Markazi Maktabah-yi Islami, 1954, reprinted 1984), *Dawat-i Islami*

- Hindustan main* (Delhi: Markazi Maktabau-yi Islami, 1984), and Anwar Ali Khan Soze, "Muslim Withdrawal from Politics: The Only Way Out," *Radiance* (7 December 1969); p. 11.
3. Theodore P. Wright, Jr, "The Muslim League in South India Since Independence: A Study in Minority Group Political Strategies", *American Political Science Review* 60, no.3 (September 1966); pp. 579-99.
  4. Ansar Harvani, former Congress MP from Badayun, UP claims that League defectors were accepted in Congress over the objection of "nationalists" like him, see his *Before Freedom and After*, (New Delhi: Gian Publication House, 1989); pp. 104-35. Among the Leaguers who were accepted in Congress was Begum Qudsiya Izaz Rasul. Liyaqat Ali Khan, Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, Z.H. Lari, I.I. Chundrigar, and other Muslim Leaguers had left India by 1950. Nawab Ismail Khan and Sayyid Muhammad Saadullah retired from politics. S.H. Suhrawardy did not stay on in India as "he considered himself only the provincial, not a national leader of Indian Muslims", according to his own admission, see Begum Shaista Ikramullah, *Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy—A Biography*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1991); p. 59.
  5. Even Maulana Azad had to seek a predominantly Muslim constituency to secure electoral victory. In 1952 he contested in Rampur-cum-Bareilly and in Gurgaon, Panjab in the 1957 election.
  6. *The Times of India*, 27 April 1964, cited in G.S. Churye. *Whither India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974); p. 232.
  7. The best account of the MMM is given by Zaheer Masood Qureshi, "Electoral Strategy of a Minority Pressure Group: The Muslim Majlis-i Mushawarat." *Asian Survey* 8 (December 1968); pp. 976-87.
  8. Farzana Shaikh, "Muslims and Political Representation in Colonial India: The Making of Pakistan", *Modern Asian Studies* 20 (1986); pp. 539-57.
  9. Ivor Jennings, *Some Characteristics of the Indian Constitution*, (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1953).
  10. The account of the Constituent Assembly debate on the separate electorates is based on Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) pp. 149-53.

11. Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, (Lahore: Longmans, 1961); pp. 401-15.
12. Austin, op. cit., p. 154.
13. Patel's speech and accounts of this phase of Muslim politics given in Mohamed Raza Khan, in *What Price Freedom* (Madras, 1969).
14. See chapter 26 entitled "Muslims and Reservation of Seats", in Raza Khan, op. cit.
15. K.M. Munshi, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, (Bombay: Bharatya Vidya Bhavan, 1967); p. 316; and *Constituent Assembly Debates*, vol 8, pp. 269-309, 317-55.
16. Advocates of proportional representation include a politician, the late Dr. A.J. Faridi, "Proportional Representation", *Radiance* (8 January 1967), and the same journal dated 19 March 1967; an academic Prof. S.A.H. Haqqi, "Muslims in India: A Behavioural Introduction", in *Muslim Situation in India*, edited by Iqbal A. Ansari (New Delhi: Sterling, 1989) p. 58. Syed Shahabuddin does not think that the time is ripe for this demand to be made. See his interview with *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (4 June 1989); p. 23. The Indian Union Muslim League reiterated the demand for proportional representation in June 1990. See "IUML National Convention Resolutions, Delhi 23-24 June 1990", *Muslim India* (October 1990); pp. 442-43.
17. Shahabuddin Ghawri, "Bahujan Samaj Party aur Musalman", *Afsar-i Milli* 5 (February 1990); pp. 9-15. See also Dagmar Markova, "Efforts at Uniting Muslims and Dalits in the 1980s", *Archiv Orientalni* 58 (1990); pp. 33-42. On the ambivalence among some Dalits towards Muslims see, Gopal Guru, "Emergence of Bahujan Mahasangh in Maharashtra", *Economic and Political Weekly* (13-20 November 1993); pp. 2500-2502.
18. Inderjit Badhwar, "Saffron Setback", *India Today* (15 December 1993); pp. 26-28; Mayank Chhaya, "How Socialist Alliance Took UP", *India Abroad* (10 December 1993); p. 6.
19. John R. Wood, "Congress Restored? The KHAM Strategy and Gujarat", pp. 197-227, in *State Politics in India*, edited by John R. Wood, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984).
20. Two authors show Muslim percentage in several constituencies without identifying them by name. See Myron Weiner, *India at the Polls: A Study of Parliamentary Elections*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1983, p. 121;

- and Llyod and Susanne Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 195, though the source cited in Rudolph's book is strange.
21. See S.M. Sayeed, "Role of Muslim Majlis in U.P. Politics", *Indian Political Parties*, edited by L.M. Singhvi (New Delhi: Research, 1977).
  22. *Census of India, 1981, Series 2, Andhra Pradesh. Household Population by Religion of Head of Household* (New Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1986).
  23. See *A Compendium of Indian Elections*, edited by David Butler, Ashok Lahiri, and Pranoy Roy, (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers, 1984).
  24. The Majlis has been the subject of a number of research articles and theses, see the bibliography entitled "Elections in Hyderabad", noted below.
  25. Personal interview at Darussalam, Hyderabad, July 8, 1990.
  26. See "A Firm Majlis Hold", *Frontline* (22 March -April 4, 1986); pp. 34-39; and "Cracks in the Telugu Citadel", *Probe India* (April 1986); pp. 61-62.
  27. Author's personal interviews with leaders of the local units of national and regional parties in Hyderabad in Summer 1990. Interviewees include: Bangaru Laxman and Baddam Balreddi (BJP); Mirza Ansar Baig and T. Laxma Reddy (TDP); Sayyid Rahmat Ali, former member of Rajya Sabha, K. Laxma Reddy, and V. Hanumantha Rao (INC). In addition, this strategy was by and large confirmed by non-political Muslim organizations such as the Jamaat-i Islami, Taamir-i Millat as well as influential individuals like Maulana Hamiduddin Aaqil Hussami.
  28. Masood Ali Khan and S. Mehdi Hussain, "Role of the Urdu Press in 8th Lok Sabha Elections in Andhra Pradesh", *Religion and Society* 33 (1986); pp. 1-13.
  29. For this aspect of Muslim society, see a map describing Urdu/Muslim disparity in different parts of India in *An Exploration of India*, edited by David Sopher (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) p. 306.
  30. Ale Narendra's interview with R.J. Rajendra Prasad in *Frontline* (March 22-April 4, 1986) p. 47; and Swami Shantananda, *Hindu Regeneration* (Hyderabad, 1986).

31. Llyod and Susanne H. Rudolph. *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); p. 195.
32. C.V. Subba Rao notes, "in 1984 elections, the per centage of voting in some constituencies like Charminar, Chandrayangutta, Karwan and Yakutpura is significantly higher than the rest of the city." *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (5 May 1985); p. 17. Myron Weiner found no significant difference between voter turnout in "Muslim" constituencies and general constituencies in 1977 and 1980 elections. See his *India at the Polls: A Study of the Parliamentary Elections* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1983); pp. 147 and 172.
33. Mirza Ansar Baig, "Reflections on the Result of 1989 General Elections", unpublished typescript, Hyderabad, 1989.
34. "Exit Poll: The Voters' Profile", *India Today* (15 December 1989); pp. 52-53, includes a section on Muslim voters.
35. David Butler, *India Decides, Elections, 1952-1991*, (New Delhi: Living Media, 1991).
36. Shabih Ahmad, "Muslim League in Uttar Pradesh Politics: A Case Study of Moradabad District", *Mainstream* (28 June 1975); pp. 13-26.
37. G. Ram Reddy, "The Politics of Accommodation: Caste, Class and Domination in Andhra Pradesh", in *Dominance and State Power in Modern India*, edited by Francine R. Frankel and M.S.A. Rao (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) I; p. 305.
38. This was related to me by Sayyid Rahmat Ali, former member of Rajya Sabha.
39. Reddy, op. cit.
40. J.A. Laponce, *The Protection of Minorities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960).
41. Personal interviews with Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, Ibrahim Sulayman Sait, and G.M. Banatwala in Summer 1990 in New Delhi.
42. According to Ale Narendra, "Muslim population in Hyderabad is increasing due to migration from Bidar and Gulbarga, adjoining districts of Hyderabad, which affected our chances of success in the elections", and "this imbalance in population ratio in the old city should be rectified." Quoted in an interview with *Frontline* (March 22-April 4, 1986 ):47.

According to Inder Mohan, a social worker of Delhi, "The Ruling circles of the Congress Party began to think that such a concentration of Muslims in one particular pocket of Delhi should not be allowed to continue... Jagmohan, Vice-Chairman, DDA, told me personally more than once that this community must be dispersed in different parts of the city." Quoted in Violette Graff, "Communal Relations in Indian Politics: A Case Study of Chandni Chowk (1967-1977)." *Asie du Sud. Traditions et changements*, edited by Marc Caborieau (Paris: CNRS, 1984) 405. Javid Laiq, the journalist who quoted Jagmohan's alleged remark about Muslim concentration was sued years later by the DDA Vice-Chairman and sentenced to jail for four months. See Tavleen Singh, "A Critical Examination of Turkman Gate Defamation Ruling", *Indian Express* (2 August 1992).

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Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, winner in 1984, 1989 and 1991 contests.

Laxma Reddy, INC candidate in 1989.

Krishna Reddy, TDP candidate in 1989.

Hanumantha Rao, INC candidate in 1984.

Prabhakar Reddy, TDP candidate in 1984.

### Other Politicians

Syed Shahabuddin, M.P.

Syed Abdullah Bukhari, Shahi imam of Jama Masjid, Delhi.

Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait, M.P., Muslim League.

Ghulam Mahmud Banatwala, former M.P., Muslim League.

Jaypal Reddy, MP, Janata Dal.

**Journalists in Hyderabad**

Mahmud Ansari (*Munsif*)

Syed Amin Jafari (*Newstime*)

Mahbub Husain Jigar (*Siyasat*)

Amarnath K. Menon (*India Today*)

Sitaram (*Deccan Chronicle*)

Syed Wiqaruddin (*Rahnuma-yi Deccan*)

## Chapter 8

# Conclusion

In the closing decade of the twentieth century, Muslims find themselves in an unenviable position in the country. This is particularly ironic as they were in the forefront of the freedom struggle hoping to build a nation where they would be free to develop and prosper along the lines prescribed by their faith. Frequently victims of pogroms perpetrated by the mobs and the police alike, their situation is now comparable—at times at least—to that of the Jews in Nazi Germany, and many consider themselves as step children of mother India. Widely scattered throughout the country, they lack political muscle. Among the poorest and the most illiterate, they are virtually the underclass of India. They pose no economic challenge to the upper caste Hindus nor do they constitute a security risk to the nation. Whatever capacity the Muslims had to inflict damage on the State they used it in 1947-48. The post-independence Muslim community seeks neither domination over the majority group nor secession from the country. They desire nothing more than to be left alone to peacefully pursue a way of life as taught by their religion and civilization with which they are most comfortable.

The key issue for Indian Muslims is how to cope with the loss of political power. The political castration of the Muslims performed by the Constituent Assembly in May 1949 through the abolition of separate electorates represents a structural roadblock to the only mechanism of collective realization of

power. Shorn of that power, the Muslim community is a helpless spectator to the recurring pogroms, poor achievement in education, discrimination in the opportunities for economic advancement, and a relentless assault on aspects of Muslim culture and identity such as Urdu. The issue of Muslim identity is compounded by the attitudes and policies of the Hindu elite—whether of Centrist or Leftist type or that of the Right wing. Secularist, liberal, or Marxist, and Centerist Hindus, whether they be Gandhian, Sarvodian, Nehruvian, or in the Lohian mould, they all conceive of religion in Western, post-reformation sense as a “personal matter.” This is in fundamental clash with Muslim conception of religion as divine law, and as a set of values and norms governing what the Western world calls as “public” and “private” domains. It is rarely recognized that many Muslims find the Westernized Indian elite’s emphasis on secularism and the banishment of religion from public life about as threatening as the assimilative pressure of the Hindu Right-wing. The modernists’ forecast that reason and skepticism will eventually curtail religion has proved premature. The Muslim community’s massive mobilization over the uniform civil code in 1986-87 surprised only the secularists. The demand of the secular state on the Muslim minority to “reform” its personal law, to forgo its identity, or to “modernize” Islam is therefore resented. Secularism, as far as most Muslims are concerned should not extend beyond state neutrality between different religious groups inhabiting a diverse country. Even well-meaning leaders like Nehru ridiculed the idea of Muslim identity and culture as “a figment of a few imaginations only”, which he thought would “vanish at the touch of reality”. At the heart of the Hindu-Muslim problem in India now is the Muslim demand for an explicit recognition of its identity in its own right. Modern states stress individual rights and responsibilities to the exclusion of collective group identity. Many minority groups see the stress on individual rights as an attempt at homogenization and rejection of their identities. As Charles W. Maynes has said:

The communications revolution heightens the political consciousness of minorities everywhere. An emphasis on



individual rights does not satisfy them. The demand of many is precisely that they not be homogenized. They assert dignity through their own language and cultures.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the secularist demand on the Muslim community to forsake religion-based identity as the price of incorporation into the state, the Hindu right-wing seeks the assimilation of the minorities on the basis of Indianization. To the Muslim community both approaches achieve the same result, one in the name of secular humanism and the other in the name of Indian nationalism. Ironically, Nehru's dismissal of Muslim culture is seen not greatly different from Madhok's demand for Indianization.<sup>2</sup> The job of integrating a sullen and frustrated minority of millions into the national mainstream can be accomplished only if the state and the majority group concede and positively accept Muslim identity to be just as legitimate as the regional ethno-linguistic identities, and withdraw measures to stamp out aspects of Muslim culture such as Urdu and stop propping up toadies and show boys *à la raj*. Just as Bengali, Gujarati, and Tamil identities are not in competition with or at the expense of a national identity, so is the case with Muslim identity. When Bengalis, Gujaratis, and Tamilians are quite comfortable with dual identities (one ethno-linguistic and the other a national identity), the same should hold true of Muslims. Indian and Muslim can quite legitimately be two sides of a coin, both equally valid.

In a multi-religious and multi-lingual society such as India, the Muslims would like to see constitutional and legal arrangements that would allow each constituent component to preserve and advance its cultural identity in the manner of a Mogul garden. Modelled on *bagh-i bihisht* or *riyaz al-jannat*, the heavenly garden, it is a formal garden, neatly cut up into sections which do not impinge upon each other and yet form part of a coherent pattern which is aesthetically pleasing and spiritually satisfying. By analogy most Muslims—minus a thin layer of "native aliens"—seek a political order in India in which the integrity of each component is ensured so that it may make its unique contribution to the whole. Between the segments,

firmly separated by law, there will be no competition, no rivalry, and the expression of each will therefore be wholly self-determined, and because it is so self-determined it will be undistorted and free of violence, which is the consequence of external interference in the expression of a community's authentic self. In the Muslim view, self-determination of each is a precondition of welfare of all in a plural society.

Through acts of commission and omission the Indian elite have taken measures to sabotage Muslim identity at many levels. To think that a community of over 100 million can be beaten into submission through recurring pogroms and riots or incorporated into the lower rungs of the Hindu society as many seriously contemplate, is to live in a world of make believe. Millions of Muslims with a splendid record of achievement in art and architecture, music, literature, sports, crafts, and industry, are acutely conscious of their membership in a trans-Indian world community of Islam. Shared memories of distant and recent past, a distinct language and script, rituals, symbols, and common images, in short all the major attributes of a nation—except territory—are found among Indian Muslims. Such a nation cannot be exterminated or expelled out of the country today as was done 500 years ago in medieval Spain. The valiant resistance of Bosnian Muslims against Serbian aggression despite all odds foreshadows what may happen in India should Muslims be pushed to the wall. We have seen a preview of that scenario in the serial bombings of March 1993 in Bombay. Most Indian Muslims would agree with the Gandhian ideology that recognizes a legitimate place of religion in polity and a positive acceptance of religio-cultural diversity—not grudging tolerance. This ideology offers a better prospect for national integration than the assimilationist theory and practice of the secularists and Hindustvites alike. As Iqbal said in 1931:

I have no hesitation in declaring that, if the principle that every Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homelands is recognized as the basis of communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India.<sup>3</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi, C. Rajagopalacharya, and Jaya Prakash Narayan in the recent past saw no conflict between a religion-based Muslim identity and a national identity encompassing all Indians irrespective of religious affiliation. Former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, and Chief Ministers like Mulayam Singh Yadav and Laloo Prasad Yadav, and various Dalit leaders in the present are examples of similar thinking. It is with these people that Muslims could build alliances for a new society. In addition to alliance building at the political level, there is another level at which Muslims must work. Outside the political arena, they must begin networking with trade unions, professional organizations, non-Muslim religious leaders, social workers, and voluntary associations of all types. It is in collaboration with these organizations that Muslims could build national consensus for the amelioration of the Muslim situation. It is wise to remember that anti-Muslim sentiment is not the monopoly of the *Sangh Parivar* alone. The Congress Party has had more than an ample share of Hindu bigots whose intolerance of the minority rights is rivalled only by the RSS. After all, the numerous pogroms, abolition of separate electorates, the bloody take-over of Hyderabad State, elimination of Muslims from government jobs, and the suppression of Urdu took place during the hey day of the Congress. Indeed there is an amazing consistency between the practice of the Congress and the Hindu Right-wing, even if they differ in theory about attitudes toward Muslims. There is no doubt that the Hindu right-wing is the major impediment to the satisfactory resolution of Muslim issues, but there is considerable ambivalence among secular-minded Hindus on the Muslim issues.

On the other hand, Muslims themselves could take measures to allay misgivings in the minds of the ambivalent secular-minded Hindus. There is for instance, no need to speak of Muslim identity in exclusive either or terms. To emphasize only one or the other identity—Muslim and Indian—has proven to be explosive. With regards to the question of economic opportunity, in addition to making demand on the state, other steps are also imperative. Greater self-reliance through the community's own

collective initiative in education, charity, and philanthropy characterized by the organized collection and sound management of *zakat*, *sadaqat*, *firat*, cooperatives, rejuvenation of the *awqaf*, and social reform offers an alternative to the route of community improvement through politics.

### Notes

1. Charles W. Maynes, "The Demands of Ethnic Minorities Won't Go Away". *Outsider*. The Newsletter of the Minority Rights Group, no. 25 (November 1987); p. 4.
2. The seemingly ironic symbiosis in Nehru and Advani's views on the assimilation of Indian Muslims was well-captured by Girilal Jain, "Advani Following in the Footsteps of Nehru and Gandhi", *Sunday Mail*, 7 April 1991, as reproduced in *Muslim India* (October 1991); p. 470.
3. Muhammad Iqbal, *Presidential Address at the Muslim League Session* (Allahabad, 1931).

# Appendix

## Chronology

### *The Forties*

*August 1947*

Independence and partition of Bengal and Panjab. Large scale massacres in North India. Virtual exchange of population in Panjab.

*October 1947*

First India-Pakistan war over Kashmir.

*December 1947*

Evacuee Property Act comes into effect empowering courts to seize Muslim owned properties.

A convention in Lucknow dissolves the Muslim League in North India. Madras Provincial League decides to continue the organization.

*January 1948*

Mohandas K. Gandhi murdered by a Hindu fanatic named Nathuram Godse.

*September 1948*

Operation Polo against Hyderabad. Indian troops invade Hyderabad and force its annexation into India. Several thousand innocent Muslims killed in an orgy of violence directed by the Congress gangs. A Military Governor takes over the State administration.

*May 1949*

Separate electorates, the mainstay of Muslim politics in India, abolished despite opposi-

tion. Sardar Patel bullies Begum Izaz Rasul into introducing a resolution to that effect in the Constituent Assembly.

September 1949

*Jagirdari* abolished in Hyderabad.

14 September, 1949. Constituent Assembly declares Hindi in Devanagari letters as the sole official language of India over the protest of speakers of Urdu, Bengali, and Dravidian languages.

### The Fifties

January 1950

Constitution comes into effect. Gives Muslims rights equal to others. Articles 44 and 48 (the first pertaining to uniform civil code and the other regarding cow slaughter) found objectionable by the Muslims.

Bihar Official Language Act makes Hindi the sole official language of the State of Bihar.

April 1950

Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Liyaqat Ali Khan sign an agreement on the minorities and reaffirm their rights in the Constitutions of India and Pakistan.

January 1951

*Zamindari* abolished in Uttar Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh Official Language Act comes into force making Hindi the sole official language.

1954 Waqf Act introduced, which lays down a comprehensive structure to ensure proper administration of the *awqaf*.

August 1955

Dar al-Tarjama, the translation bureau of Osmania University destroyed by fire on the orders of its Curator Ishvar Nath Topa.

1956

Evacuee Property Act abolished.

1958

Death of Maulana Abulkalam Azad

*The Sixties*

- 1961-1963 Large scale riots kill hundreds of Muslims in Jamshedpur, Rourkela, and other towns.
- 1964 Muslim Majlis-i Mushawarat formed at a meeting in Nadwat al-Ulama, Lucknow.
- 1965 India-Pakistan war over Kashmir. Hundreds of Muslims arrested throughout the war.
- 1967 Death of Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan. Massacre at Ranchi, Bihar.
- 1969 Great Ahmadabad massacre. Badshah Khan fasts to protest killing of Muslims.

*The Seventies*

- 1971 India-Pakistan war over Bangladesh. Muslim leaders put behind bars for the duration of the war. Thousands of Bihari Muslims rendered homeless as a result of Bengali reprisals.
- 1972 All India Muslim Personal Law Board formed in Bombay.  
I.K. Gujral Committee formed to look into issues of Urdu.  
Submits its report in 1975 which was published in 1977.
- 1975-76 Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency. Gandhi's goons bulldoze Muslim homes in old Delhi, forcibly sterilize men, rape women. Muslims resist, leading the police to perpetrate the Turkman Gate massacre. A court later indicts Jagmohan, vice-chairman of the Delhi Development Authority for his role in the massacres. Forcible sterilizations reported in Muzaffarnagar, UP.
- 1977 State of internal Emergency lifted. Ban lifted on Jamaat-i Islami imposed in 1975 along with the RSS

Indian National Congress defeated in the national election. Muslims play a leading role in the Congress ouster.

1978 Minorities Commission formed by the Janata Government.

### *The Eighties*

1980 Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) jawans kill hundreds of Muslims during Id prayers in Moradabad, UP.

1981 Hundreds of former untouchables embrace Islam in a dramatic ceremony in Meenakshipuram, Tamil Nadu.

1983 Lalung tribals kill over 5000 Muslims in a mad orgy of violence in Nellie, district Nowgong, Assam.

1985 Shah Bano controversy

1986 Babari Masjid seized by a court order in Ayodhya, Fayzabad, UP. Nation-wide protest begins lasting through December 1992.

1987 PAC kills hundreds of unarmed innocent Muslim young men in Meerut. Amnesty International denounces India.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act comes into effect.

1989 Election-related massacres in many parts of India. Hindu mobs march on the Babari Masjid and damage it.

### *The Nineties*

1990 Rath Yatra (chariot procession) by Hindu fanatic L.K. Advani kills hundreds of Muslims in different parts of the country in October-December.

1991 Ali Sardar Jaafari Committee Report issued on Urdu.



1992

July 11: Lok Sabha approves the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Bill, which prohibits conversion of any place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, fulfilling a longstanding Muslim demand.

May 12, The Congress Government of P.V. Narasimha Rao introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha giving statutory status to the National Minorities Commission. The Lok Sabha approved the bill. The BJP was the only party opposing it.

6 December, Gāngs led by the *Sangh Parivar* consisting of Vishva Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, the RSS, and the BJP completely demolishes Babari Masjid, as the police watched. Anti-Muslim violence breaks out all over the country. Several thousand Muslims killed in mob attacks as well as police firings. Worldwide condemnation of the GOI's failure to protect the mosque and the Muslims. Reporters belonging to the foreign press severely beaten up by the fanatical Hindu mob in Ayodhya. Jamaat-i Islami, Islami Seva Sangh (ISS) based in Kerala, banned alongwith the RSS, VHP, and the Bajrang Dal, another anti-Muslim organization. Several Muslim women gang-raped in Surat. . The gang rape was video-taped and shown in a number of places.

January 1993

Bloody pogrom of Muslims in Bombay directed by the police in collaboration with the storm troopers of the Shiv Sena. SS Chief Bal Thackeray publicly claims responsibility, and urges treatment of Muslims along the lines of Jews in Nazi Germany. The

Maharashtra State Government takes no action against the SS or its chief.

*March 1993*

Bombay rocked by 13 serial bomb explosions, killing over 300 people. Police blame Memon brothers and foreign hand, though no proof provided.

*June 1993*

Ban on RSS lifted.

*November 1993*

State elections in UP, MP, Rajasthan, and Delhi. A Muslim, Dalit, and lower caste Hindu coalition routs BJP in UP. BJP wins only in Delhi.

*March 1994*

The Supreme Court lifts ban on Jamaat-i Islami.

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